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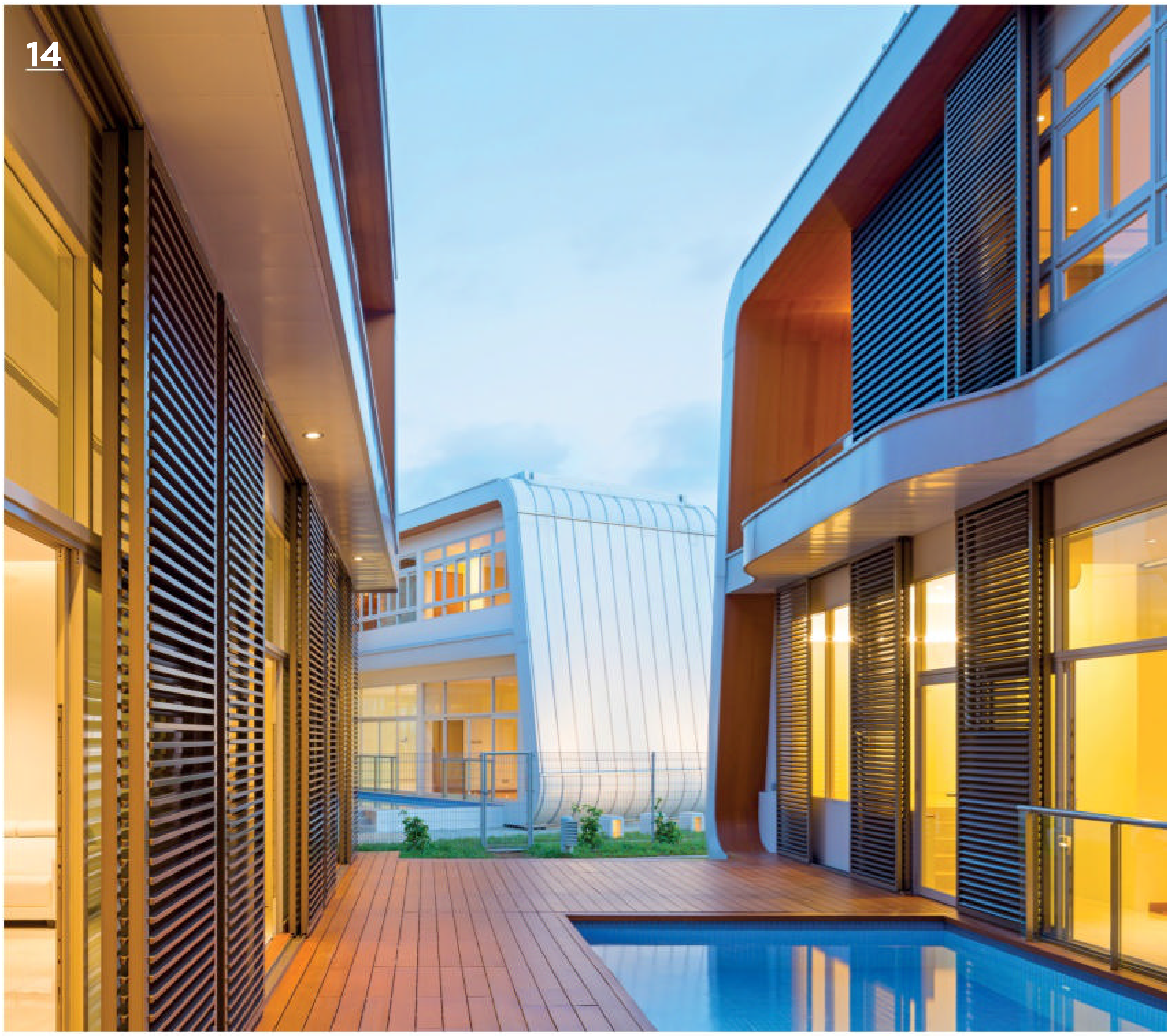

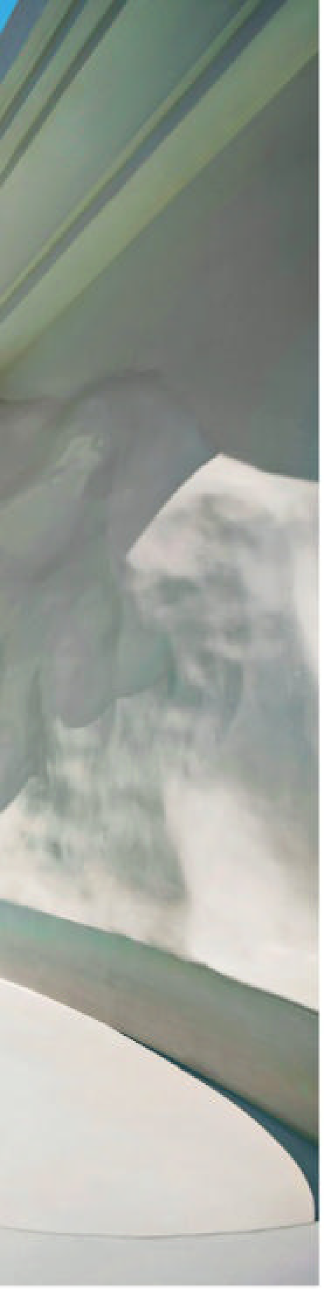

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GREEN CONSCIENCE

I remember Singapore being cooler when I was a child, and there'd be afternoons so breezy you actually had to shut up the windows in order to keep out the wind. We didn't have air-conditioning till my family moved to our second home when I was a teenager, but it never seemed to bother any of us and we'd only switch it on during the hottest of nights, which were few and far between. Ah, how I miss those days.

I'm sure most of us would have come to the dire realisation that climate change is more than just a term bandied around by tree-hugging fanatics. It is happening and we can feel the effects from the erratic weather patterns and rising sea levels. Yet while some believe it's too late to make a change, I believe now, more than ever, is the moment we all need to make an active change in our lives if we want to ensure the survival of the planet for future generations.

Change is difficult, especially when it means sacrificing some level of convenience on our part, but Rome wasn't built in a day and it's reasonable to take baby steps towards the vision. For homeowners, that means relooking the way we live, from the amount of electricity we require to the amount of wastage generated by our daily consumption.

It is heartening to note that there is a growing number of homeowners, who are experimenting with growing their own produce either through hydroponic systems or conventional urban farming methods. Thanks to new technology, we also have apps, where we can sell or exchange good but used appliances with others. This issue is dedicated to our green warriors, and is filled with ideas on ways to take that vital first step towards building a green home. Enjoy!

YOUNG LIM
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

photography ANGELA GUO art direction NONIE CHEN

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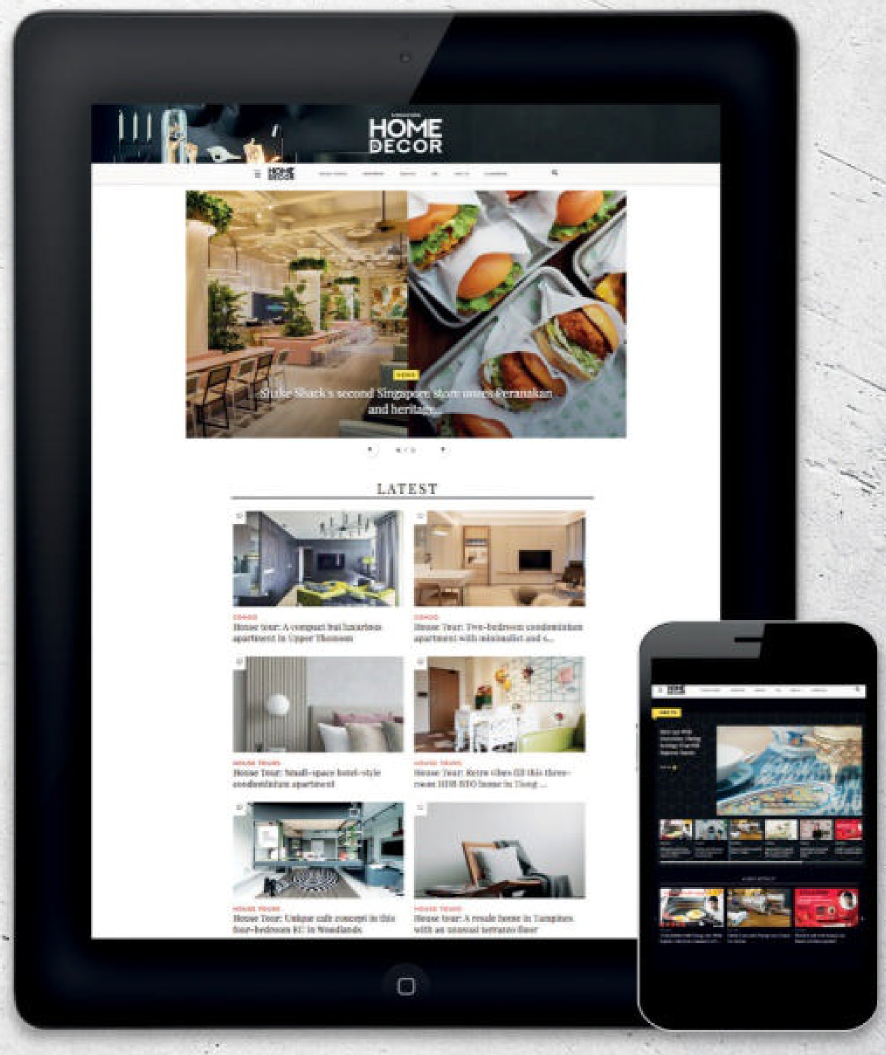

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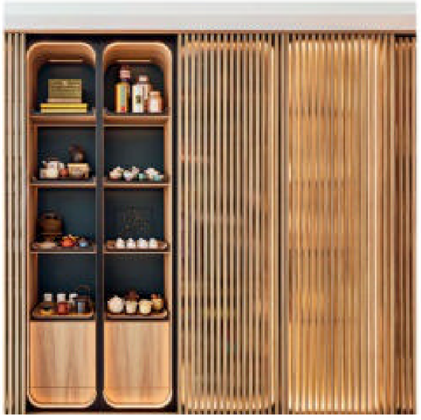

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www.pinterest.com/homeanddecorsg

LIVING GREEN

Sustainable living is all about being eco-friendly and promoting a circular economy. Start by supporting these local initiatives and eco-friendly brands that offset your carbon footprint and are gentler on the earth.

Singapore is going big on sustainable development with the Green Plan 2030, where everyone is encouraged to play our part by making a change, however big or small it may be. A study from the OCBC Climate Index, conducted by OCBC Bank and Eco-Business in 2022, found that personal benefits like better health, cost-savings, and convenience stand as the main motivators for climate change. Almost half of the total respondents are motivated to live sustainably in order to save money and create an overall cleaner and greener environment. Keen to get involved? Here are 15 sustainable living hacks that you can incorporate into your everyday life.

▶ GIVE AND TAKE FREE THINGS

photo GOODHOOD.SG

GOODHOOD.SG

A ground-up movement revitalising the kampong spirit conveniently through a mobile app, GoodHood is a digital platform that enables Singaporeans to cultivate a giving, helping, and sharing spirit, reducing waste in the process. On the GoodHood platform, you will find listings of things and food items that are free to grab, the shared virtual storeroom features unused but useful items. You can start by listing your power drill to lend to your neighbours, or putting up a borrow request for a trolley that you would like to use for a couple of days.

Visit goodhoodsg.com

▶ SIGN UP FOR WEEKLY VEGETABLE SUBSCRIPTION

CITY BOX SUBSCRIPTION BY EDIBLE GARDEN CITY

Through community-centric agriculture and a closed-loop farming model, the social enterprise, Edible Garden City is dedicated to creating social change. By subscribing to the City Box Subscription for a weekly bundle of vegetables, you will be supporting the local urban farmers to grow safe and fresh vegetables. In the box, there are mixed and varying produce of sustainable leafy greens, mushrooms, herbs and fruits as bonus for each week. Choose from an eight- or 12-week subscription, each box costs from $35.

Visit www.ediblegardencity.com

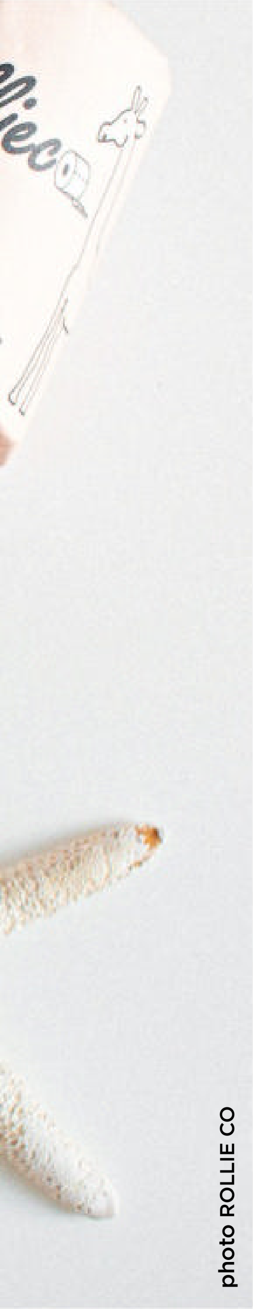


photo ROLLIE CO

◀ SWAP OUT YOUR TOILET ROLLS

ROLLIE CO

Instead of using 100 per cent virgin pulp in toilet rolls, Rollie Co offers toilet rolls made of 100 per cent recycled paper from used books, documents, and industrial paper waste from paper product production too. As toilet papers are single-use items that cannot be reused or recycled, using toilet rolls made from recycled paper reduces the need to cut down more trees. Of course, using the bidet will remove paper use entirely, but the choice is yours.

Visit www.therollieco.com

▶ MAKE YOUR OWN HANDMADE SOAP

SOAP MINISTRY

Behind Soap Ministry is a mother's love, where the founder, Diana Ong, took matters into her own hands by making handmade soap to improve and reduce relapses of her daughter's skin condition. Started in 2010 as a handmade soap retailer, Soap Ministry now offers soap-making courses providing you with the opportunity to make your own bars, from cold-pressed soaps to bath bombs. Only organic, natural, and bio-degradable ingredients that are good for the skin and safe for the environment are used. Visit www.soapministry.com

PERSONAL BENEFITS LIKE BETTER HEALTH, COST-SAVINGS, AND CONVENIENCE STAND AS THE MAIN MOTIVATORS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE.

◀ CHOOSE SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES

THE GREEN COLLECTIVE

The future is green with The Green Collective, Singapore's largest collective of local sustainable brands, including micro brands made easily available across its online marketplaces and retail shops. You can make better choices by choosing sustainable everyday product alternatives, from reusable sanitary pads made of unbleached organic cotton (starting at $9.90 each), to a stain remover stick to help with any dirt and stains from your laundry for $12.

Visit www.thegreencollective.com

The Sustainability Project

▲ TAKE PART IN A SUSTAINABILITY-RELATED WORKSHOP

THE SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

Want to kickstart a sustainable lifestyle, but not sure how? On top of sharing the knowledge and passion for sustainability through blog articles since 2018, The Sustainability Project has expanded education efforts to talks and workshops. Today, they offer a range of workshops, from making your own recycled handmade paper in the traditional way, to upcycling orange peels by transforming them into eco enzymes and body scrub. The duration of each workshop is about an hour each and costs $50 per person.

Visit www.thesustainabilityproject.com ▶

photo UNPACKT

▲ REFILL DAILY NECESSITIES PACKAGE-FREE

UNPACKT

Frustrated by the amount of unnecessary packaging your purchases come in? Unpackt has the perfect solution, by providing package-free food and household essentials in bulk refillable containers. Established in 2018, the brick-and-mortar zero-waste grocery and lifestyle store now offers online ordering and deliveries as well. Orders are delivered in reusable containers that are returned on the next delivery, or you can choose the paper kraft bag option at a small cost.

Visit www.unpackt.com.sg

photo TREATSURE

▲ SAVE SURPLUS FOOD

TREATSURE

Treatsure minimises food waste through a share-and-reallocate concept, where excess food from hotels and businesses are redistributed to everyday consumers at an affordable price point. Apart from hotel buffets that you can takeaway in a box, you can also save on your groceries by purchasing the surplus from various distributors and suppliers on the Treatsure app. The savings can be quite substantial, with a bottle of organic extra virgin oil (250ml), normally costing $19.90, priced at just $11.95 instead. This initiative is certainly easier on the planet and your wallet too.

Visit www.treatsure.co

Solar-Cell Remote by Samsung

Goodbye single use batteries, and hello to a first-of-its-kind remote control with a built-in solar panel. Released in 2021, this innovation by Samsung made it into the list as one of The Best Inventions in 2022 by Time Magazine, with its environmentally-friendly design. The self-charging mode in the Solar-Cell Remote charges using both natural sunlight and artificial indoor light, or through the USB-C charge port located at the bottom.

The latest 2023 iteration also uses less recycled plastic and a 22 per cent smaller casing, which enhances its sustainability and user-friendliness. In addition to its low power consumption, the remote control could also get electricity by being near to radio frequency emitting devices such as Wi-Fi routers.

photo PACKAGE PALS

▲ DONATE USED PACKAGING

PACKAGE PALS

More online shopping means more packaging waste. Package Pals is a circular packaging initiative that collects used packaging like poly mailers, envelopes, and bubble wrap from the public and distributes them back to businesses, extending the life cycle of packaging and reducing packaging waste. If you sell your preloved items online and wish to receive the used mailer packaging, you can submit a form to express your interest online. Remember to remove your personal details from any used packaging first!

Visit www.packagepals.co

photo VERMONT SOAP

▲ CHECK OUT MOBILE LIQUID SOAP REFILLS

VERMONT SOAP

Soap refill delivery, anybody? Established in 1992, the USDA-approved and certified organic Vermont Soap from the US is now available in Singapore. Apart from using natural ingredients for its products, Vermont Soap also offers a mobile refill program for its hi-olive shower gel and liquid castile soaps. Sign up to select the size and scent of choice before the liquid soap van arrives. You can reuse any bottle for the soap refill, starting at $64 for approximately two litres.

Visit www.vermontsoapsingapore.com

▲ BORROW A REUSABLE CONTAINER FOR FREE

MUUSE

Forgot to bring your own container for takeaway? You are free to borrow, enjoy, and return the reusable takeaway container later when you are at any of Muuse's partner cafes. The local startup, Muuse (also known as multiple use in short) has a loan-and-return system that tracks the total number of borrows individually and worldwide with the unique QR code on every reusable. You can borrow and return the container via the Muuse app with a simple scan. Leave the washing to the experts, as the reusables get professionally cleaned.

Visit www.muuse.io

▶ DROP OFF CONTACT LENS BLISTERS

PROJECT 2X2 BY TWO OF A KIND

As an ongoing not-for-profit initiative by the contact lens supplier Two of a Kind, Project 2x2 has collected and recycled over one million used contact lens plastic blisters from all contact lens brands in 2022. So next time, instead of throwing your used blisters away, fill it in a recycling envelope and drop them at an advocate location or mail it to the team, where they get processed and reused as raw material after.

Visit www.twooak.com/2x2

▼ SWITCH TO BEESWAX FOOD WRAP

MINIMAKERS

Beautifully designed reusable beeswax food wraps are a delightful eco-friendly alternative to flimsy disposable cling wrap. Minimakers began as a humble experiment from home, where the founder Kai made all of the wraps by hand using all-natural and biodegradable ingredients of cotton, beeswax, jojoba oil, and tree resins. The beeswax wraps can be rewaxed after a year of use to further prolong its usage. At $9.90, you can get a beeswax wrap in a small size, that is perfect for half of an avocado.

Visit www.minimakers.com

photo MINIMAKERS

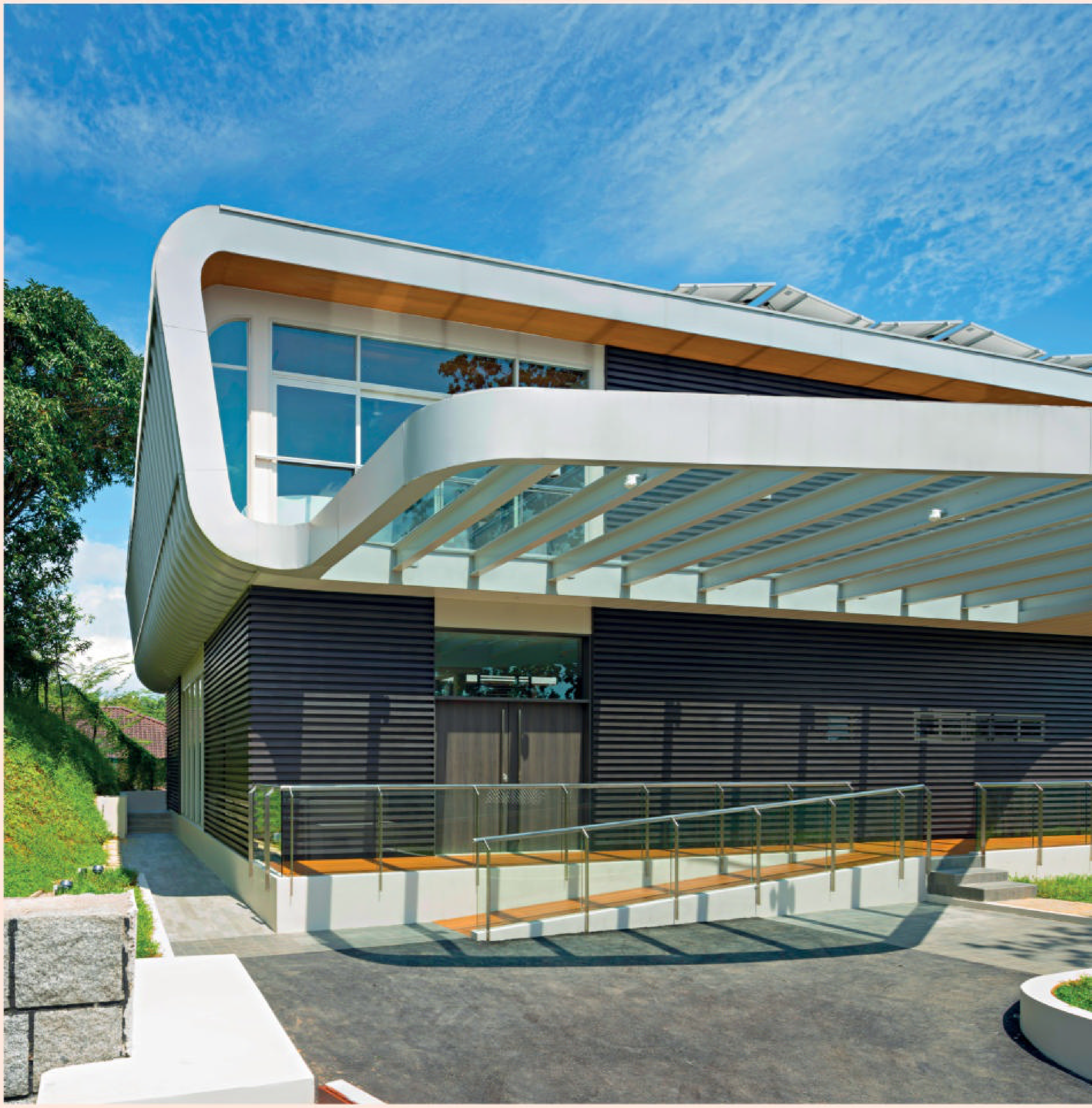
▲ SUBSCRIBE TO MONTHLY SEAFOOD SUPPLY

ONHAND AGRARIAN

What started as a dream to sell sustainable seafood, Onhand Agrarian was born out of a love for the ocean by founder, Shannon Lim. Thanks to the specially designed closed-loop zero-waste farming system that recycles the waste of one species as food for the other, the fishes survive longer without exposure to harmful fertilisers. Subscribers can look forward to an assortment of crabs and seafood monthly from $80 for a three-kilogram seafood box, delivered in reusable containers. ■

Visit www.onhandagrarian.com

text JYN TEO



FIRST OF ITS KIND

Jason Pomeroy's B House project reflects a sustainability where tropical vernacular meets modern technology to achieve a carbon negative home. LYNN TAN takes a lesson on sustainable home design and learns that it really is more than just skin deep.

HOME:
A DETACHED HOME IN BUKIT TIMAH
SIZE:
5,000 SQ FT

Nestled in the prime Bukit Timah residential enclave, the avant-garde forms of this two-storey detached home would undoubtedly draw the attention of passers-by. Beyond its futuristic aesthetics, it is the first carbon negative home in Singapore and it boasts a slew of sustainable design features that has earned it the inaugural Green Mark Platinum award for landed property from the Building and Construction Authority.

Referred to as B House, it is one of two family bungalows that were commissioned by a client who wanted to push the boundaries of sustainable design and not incur utility bills again. The client currently occupies one of the bungalows and the other is home to an expatriate family.

The man behind the design of these two homes is award-winning architect, academic, author and television presenter, Prof Jason Pomeroy. He is the founding principal of Pomeroy Studio, who was the design architect, landscape architect and sustainability consultant for the project, while Hiladt Architects managed the local authority submissions and compliance, as well as contract administration.

Jason is regarded as a thought leader in sustainable design and he was also responsible for the 'Idea House', Asia's first zero carbon home. "My studio believes in what we call the 3D's - to 'Distil, Design and Disseminate'. We distil the essence of past building traditions and their socio-cultural and environmental responsiveness, in order to be able to design for the present,

after which we can learn from such endeavours to disseminate the knowledge for future generations," he says.

A zero carbon home generates on-site clean energy that is equivalent to the energy consumed by its occupants. As a carbon negative home, the property goes beyond zero carbon by generating more clean energy via solar power than the occupants actually consume, which is then supplied back to the grid, stored or used for other purposes.

"For a home to be truly sustainable, I believe we have to look beyond just the environmental, but also consider, cultural, social, economic, technological and spatial parameters too. This is a more nuanced view of sustainable development that goes beyond the often accepted triple bottom line revolving around social, economic and environmental aspects," Jason emphasises.

Here is how B House exemplifies the six pillars of sustainability:

CULTURAL

B House is a reinterpretation of the colonial Black and White bungalow, combining its passive design strategies with modern technology. Jason and his team conducted extensive studies into the socio-cultural and spatio-cultural aspects of the Black and White bungalows before distilling their findings into formal and programmatic expressions in the home. Verandah spaces are used for public entertaining or private contemplation, and shutters and monsoon windows are a nod to tropical architecture without resorting to pastiche.

SOCIAL

In order for the home to be sustainable, the design process entailed a rigorous understanding of its occupants- their typical day, movement patterns and so on. This analysis informed Jason's mapping of the social organisation and also allowed for a clearer delineation between public (formal reception area), semi-public (courtyard and verandah) and private (bedroom) areas.

SPATIAL

Characteristic of tropical vernacular architecture, the courtyard is an integral space that forms the transition between public and private realms. It also serves as a form of passive environmental strategy by facilitating natural ventilation and allowing daylight into the heart of the home.

Apart from their programmatic and environmental contributions,

▶

verandahs also give the home its unique curvilinear appearance. Extended verandahs line the two wings of the house and give the impression of continuing into the walls and roof.

ENVIRONMENTAL
The home adopts a passive approach to green design, starting with orienting the massing such that its narrower elevations face east and west. This minimises the solar heat gain and maximises cross-ventilation facilitated through the use of movable sliding screens along the facades. Lofty ceilings and a variety of fenestrations optimise airflow, while a shallow floor plan enhances daylight penetration. These passive strategies all contribute to the reduction of artificial cooling and lighting loads.

TECHNOLOGICAL
From design to construction and completion, the project took 18 months. Its modular design comprising a 1.2-metre planning grid helped to half the construction time and minimise wet trades. Working with modular components of 300 mm, 600 mm, 900 mm and 1200 mm also negated the need for special sizes or parts and mitigated wasteful offcuts.

Jason shares: "An array of just 100 sqm of photovoltaic (PV) cells per house was sufficient to bring both units to a zero carbon position. Coupled with an extensive application of rainwater harvesting and installation of water-saving devices, consumption is reduced by 465m3 per year."

ECONOMIC
It may come as a surprise, but the construction cost of these two sustainable homes are comparable to regular detached homes of an equivalent scale and located in the same district. In other words, there was no premium for going carbon negative. "This was largely in part due to the design process of Pomeroy Studio and Pomeroy Academy, working closely together to turn a research and development opportunity into a commercially viable product that could be scaled to affordable housing of under $150 psf in future," Jason shares.

The 100 sqm of rooftop solar PV system only accounts for 1.5 percent of the overall construction cost. Based on Jason's estimates, the overall PV output of approximately 18,360 kWh/year is sufficient to provide for a household of five including energy-efficient LED lighting, ceiling fans, receptacle and pump loads. The balance can support the occasional use of an energy-efficient air-conditioning system.

These parameters encapsulate an evidence-based, quantitative and qualitative approach to design that underpins the work of Pomeroy Studio and Pomeroy Academy. "We used environmental modelling software to shape and hone the design and green guides to material specification previously researched and authored by a leading British academic institution in conjunction with Pomeroy Academy," Jason elaborates. ▶

REFERRED TO AS B HOUSE, IT IS ONE OF TWO FAMILY BUNGALOWS THAT WERE COMMISSIONED BY A CLIENT WHO WANTED TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND NOT INCUR UTILITY BILLS AGAIN.

JASON POMEROY ON SUSTAINABLE HOMES

What are some common misconceptions about sustainable homes?
One of the most common misconceptions is that sustainable homes are environmental homes. We are fixated with environmental sustainability and the reduction of consumption.

A sustainable home needs to be far more holistic in this post-pandemic, trans-migratory, digitally-enabled age. This is why sustainable homes should not just be about the environmental agenda or the socio-economic, but encompass the social, economic, environmental, spatial, cultural and technological aspects as well.

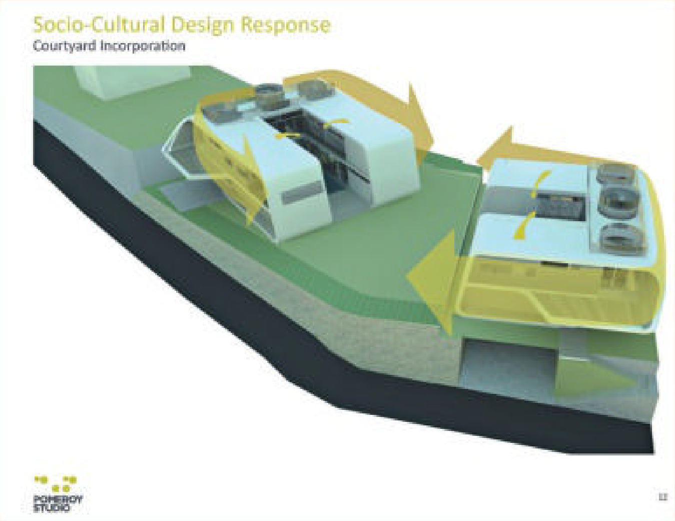
Another misconception is that sustainable design is costly design. Rather, it is economic design. If we apply passive environmental approaches to design from our forefathers and mothers, we can be reducing the reliance on artificial light and ventilation and water consumption and driving down capital costs and operational costs.

The work we have done over the last 10 years is testimony to high-achieving sustainable homes on par or even under the costs of the 'business as usual' homes.

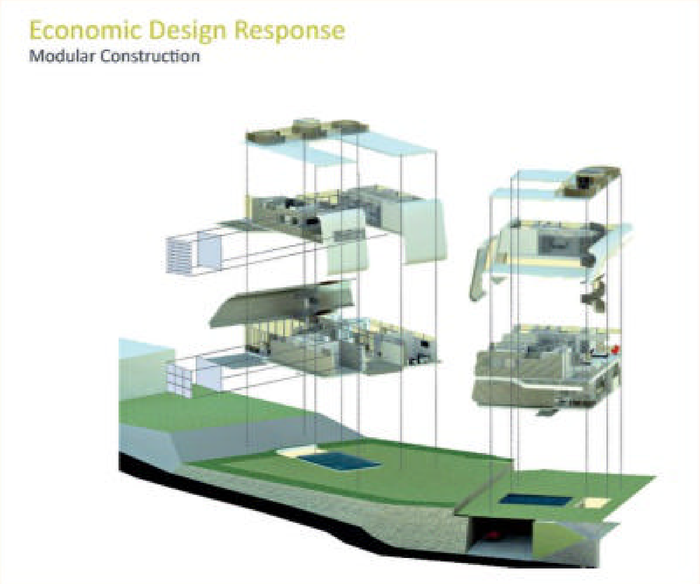
To what extent have architects and designers in Singapore embraced green design in residential developments?

We are getting there, but we need to look beyond the token gestures and the greenwashing. Legislating for a greener future and the active and commendable efforts of the Singapore Green Building Council do help, but we also need to educate ourselves to the fact that the term sustainable development was made back in 1987- an era with fundamentally

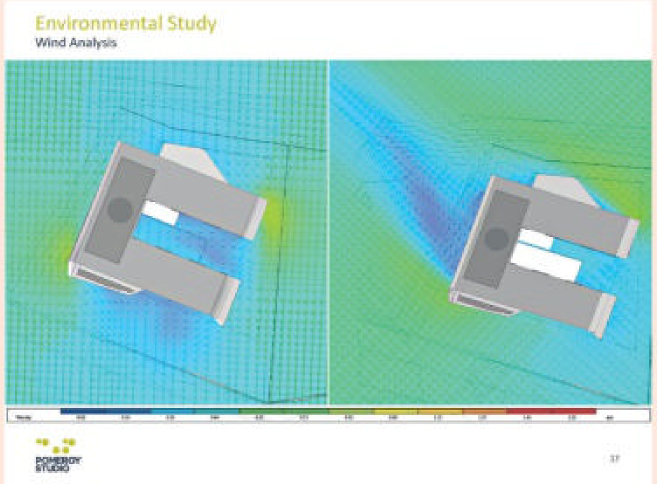
> **"A SUSTAINABLE HOME NEEDS TO BE FAR MORE HOLISTIC IN THIS POST-PANDEMIC, TRANS-MIGRATORY, DIGITALLY-ENABLED AGE."**



Socio-Cultural Design Response
Courtyard Incorporation



Economic Design Response
Modular Construction



Environmental Study
Wind Analysis

different challenges to what we face today. So, it is time to be taking a far more nuanced view of green design. Hence, our propagation of six, and not three pillars of sustainability.

Why aren't there more net-zero high-rise and landed homes in Singapore?
There are only a handful of net-zero homes in Singapore. Singapore is taking large steps towards a green future, with a number of HDB projects attaining Platinum to Gold Plus Super Low Energy Green Mark accreditation in the last ten years, mostly in Punggol.

This can be attributed to Punggol being designed as an eco-town, serving as a "living laboratory" to testbed on-going research and innovation for new building technology, sustainability initiatives, digital technology, and to integrate green urban solutions. In the coming years, there will be a greater number of net-zero homes in such regions.

In the latest PropertyGuru Singapore Consumer Sentiment Study H2 2022, it was found that only 12 per cent of respondents were willing to pay more for a net-zero home. This in itself suggests the continued general misperception that net-zero homes cost more than average homes, potentially reinforced by practitioners who still have not got the basics of sustainable design right.

However, what many home buyers and owners fail to see are the long-term cost savings involved in having a net-zero home. It is optimistic to note that perceptions are shifting and there are increasing incentives by the government. Even banks in Singapore have been actively rolling out Green Home Loans with benefits ranging from lower mortgage rates, to subsidies with the use of solar energy systems or cash vouchers.

What is your wish list for sustainable design in Singapore?
We need a mindset change. The biggest challenge for the industry and the general public is understanding that it is not what a sustainable building costs, but what it saves. The stigma of green design costing 30 per cent more than normal buildings will continue to be challenged and de-mystified as more and more green buildings are assessed in terms of their capital costs and operational costs in comparison to non-green buildings.

Common perceptions that sustainable design is costly will continue to change, with an increased awakening that the costs initially associated with green design are marginal and yet the upsides considerably outweigh the former.

Improved habitable conditions, reduced energy and water consumption and therefore utility bills and greater social mobility all contribute to an increase in savvy property purchasers basing their decisions on such tangible savings and lifestyle improvements. The World Green Council has also published findings that highlight the heightened tenancy retention, rental and sales value increases of green projects, which further demonstrate that designing green is not only good for the environment, but also good for the pocket.

It will only be a matter of time that the word 'sustainable' will be dropped from a sentence. It is an appendage used extensively in marketing collateral, and the sooner everyone realises that sustainable design is good, back-to-basics design that utilises tried and tested principles from generations before, the better.

What is the mark of a sustainable nation? With majority of the population living in high-rise flats and condominiums, how can we, collectively as a nation, achieve greener homes?
The UN World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

We acknowledge that transforming a nation into a sustainable one is a long-term, ongoing process to further the green agenda to tackle present and future challenges and cataclysms.

The Singapore Green Plan 2030 is one such indicator of the nation's commitment to the green agenda- a whole-of-nation movement to advance Singapore's sustainable development agenda that charts ambitious and concrete targets.

The Housing & Development Board has also rolled out the HDB Green Towns Programme, a 10-year plan to make HDB towns more sustainable and liveable by reducing the energy consumption in HDB towns by 15 per cent by 2030. Key focus areas include: promoting green commute, reducing energy consumption, recycling rainwater, reducing waste, and cooling HDB towns.

While these green initiatives provide opportunity for cleaner and greener living, residents have to be receptive and adapt their lifestyle to adopt new technologies and infrastructure (such as EV chargers, E-waste recycling bins and cycling racks) to collectively make a difference.

How can the individual homeowner or household living in non-landed homes incorporate sustainable elements into flats and apartments?
Our homes are increasingly expanding in functionality. We are spending an increasing amount of time in our homes in this post-pandemic era, where homes have shifted beyond a place for living, to places for working, learning, playing and recuperating.

Green renovation is one aspect to creating more sustainable living environments. Reusing existing materials and use of recycled and durable materials will bring down the amount of waste generated from home renovation. It is also key to specify green materials and fixtures, such as top-rated Energy and Water Efficiency labelled equipment that will bring down monthly utility bills.

Beyond cost savings, greener homes also enhance health and well-being. For example, the use of low or non-volatile organic compound (VOC) products and materials ensure harmful pollutants are not circulating in the air. Green-rated products in Singapore can be easily identified as they bear the Singapore Green Building Product (SGBP) logo that indicates how efficient or green a particular material is.

Viewing the balcony as an extension of the living room can provide more social space. Using the terrace as a place to grow herbs and vegetables can allow families to be more self-sustaining. Such spaces can be a further means of reducing noise and noxious pollutants from the outside and thus become an environmental buffer to one's homes too. ■

photos ROBERT SUCH

GORDON'S
HENDRICK'S
JIM BEAM
The Best Coffee in Town
Coffee
His Master's Voice
CAFFE
GELATI

design EDGE INTERIOR

GREEN MATERIALS FOR AN ECO-CONSCIOUS HOME RENOVATION

Living sustainably doesn't have to mean breaking the bank. Find out more about these reno materials that can help make your home as green as it is beautiful.

When considering their next home renovation, home owners are often faced with a myriad of choices in terms of material and finish selection available on the market. While many homeowners want to make a conscious choice in selecting environmentally-friendly or green materials, not many may be aware that renovating with sustainability in mind does not need to cost an arm and a leg.

In fact, using green materials is more than simply a trend. Sustainable living is now a way to experience more comfort, save money and reduce environmental impact during a home renovation. Home owners can make a real difference by choosing sustainable materials for their homes, whether they are building new or renovating their existing units. Here, we've gathered a list of nine locally-available materials that put sustainability at the forefront of their product offerings.

photo GOODRICH

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photo GOODRICH

FABRICS BY GOODRICH

The wallcoverings and wallpapers offered by Goodrich are made from natural materials, such as bamboo, grass cloth, or cork. These materials are renewable, biodegradable, and often have a lower environmental impact than synthetic materials. Goodrich also offers digital printing technology that allows on-demand printing, which reduces waste and minimises large production runs. This also means that wallpaper customisation and personalisation are more accessible and sustainable.

SHOWROOM LOCATION
Goodrich Global Pte Ltd
Goodrich Building, 8 Changi South Lane, #05-01
PRICE Price on request ▶

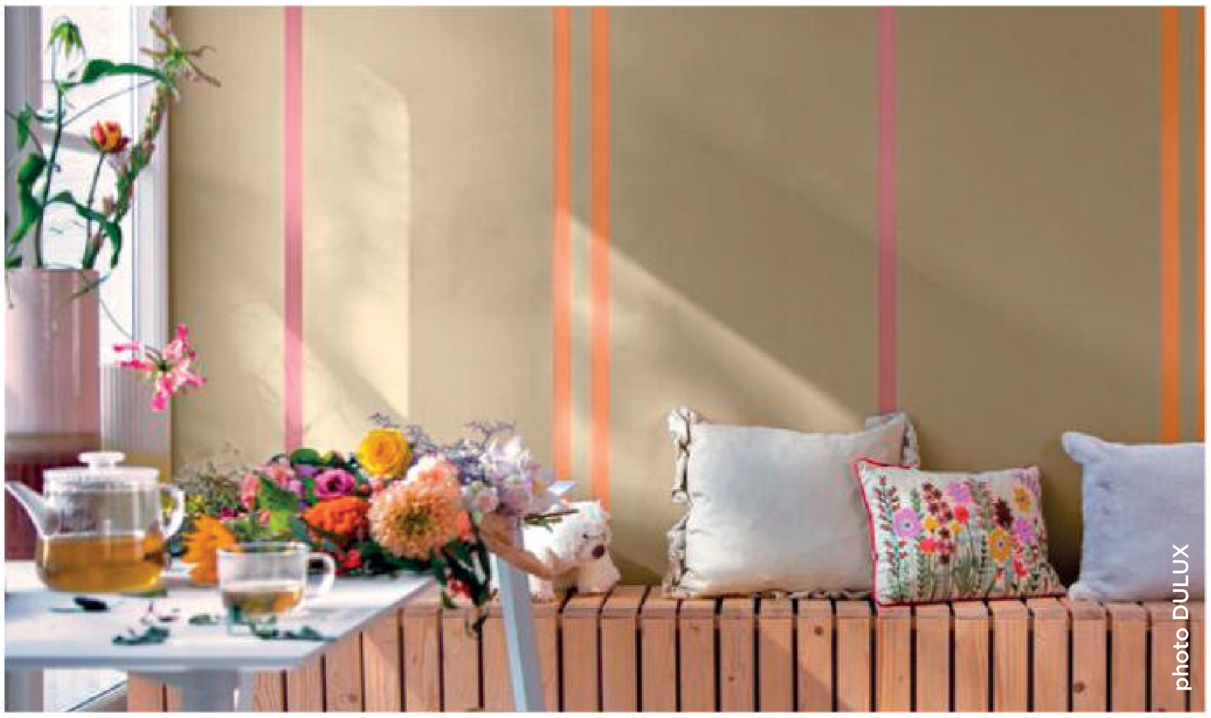


photo DULUX

PAINT BY DULUX

Dulux Wash & Wear is a premium interior quality paint with almost limitless colour options and KidProof+ Technology that delays stains from penetrating further into the paint film and can be wiped away easily. With its anti-bacterial property, it also aids to inhibit growth of certain bacteria on walls. Singapore Green Label certified, Dulux paint comes with no added lead or mercury and contains low odour and low VOC for healthy indoor living.

SHOWROOM LOCATION
All major paint shops islandwide
PRICE
Weathershield 1L from $26 onwards, 5L from $98 onwards. Dulux Wash & wear 1L from $28 onwards, 5L from $105 onwards.

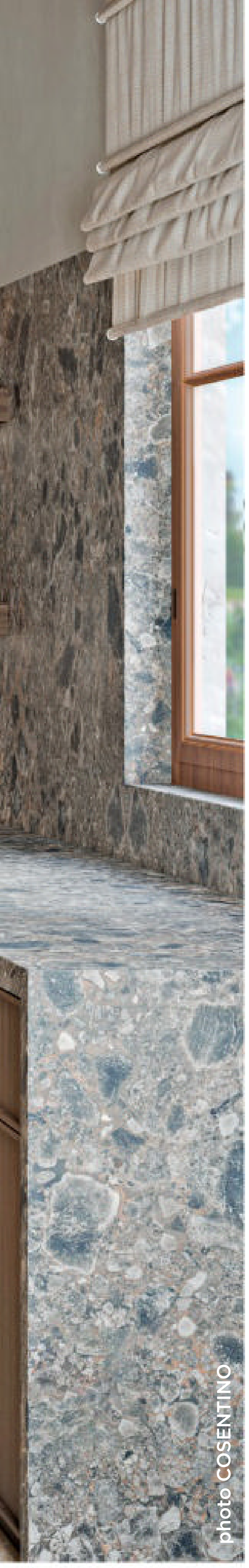


photo COSENTINO

DEKTON SURFACES BY COSENTINO

Dekton is known for its functional beauty with limitless application both indoors and outdoors. Not only is it impervious to elements, such as scratches, stains, UV rays, fire and heat, it is the only surface brand that is certified carbon neutral for its entire life cycle (from cradle to grave), which covers the gathering of raw materials, use of the product, and end of life. By offsetting 100 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions over its entire product life cycle, Dekton is a sustainable material which reduces environmental impact while achieving greater efficiency in terms of energy, consumption of resources, use of renewable electricity and sustainable mobility policies.

SHOWROOM LOCATION
Cosentino City Singapore
5 Straits View, Marina One (West Tower) #01-16/17
PRICE Price on request

NOT MANY MAY BE AWARE THAT RENOVATING WITH SUSTAINABILITY IN MIND DOES NOT NEED TO COST AN ARM AND A LEG.

photo SUZUKA

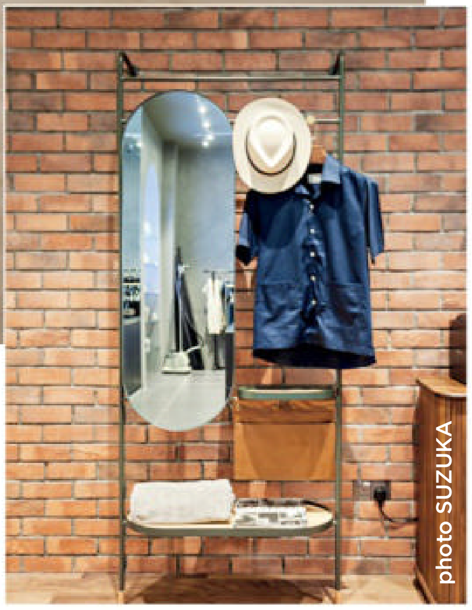


photo SUZUKA

TEXTURED COATINGS AND PAINT BY SUZUKA

Whether going for an industrial, Scandinavian, contemporary or minimalistic style, Suzuka's range of textured coatings and paints offers a unique alternative to regular paints that can spruce up any home. Premium looks – such as concrete, granite and ceramic styles – can be customised to complement home owners' specific needs. Each finish features high resistance against dust, stains and UV light. Kastone brick and stone veneer, Strato textured paint and Suzuka textured coating are all certified by the Singapore Green Labelling Scheme as the environmentally preferred coatings. ▶

SHOWROOM LOCATION
No. 4, Jalan Indah 8/15, Taman Bukit Indah 79100 Nusajaya, Johor
PRICE $1.90 per square foot (for textured coating)

SILESTONE SURFACES FROM COSENTINO

Silestone from Cosentino is the first hybrid mineral surface, composed of a high-performance blend of premium minerals, quartz, and recycled materials manufactured with 100 per cent renewable electric energy, 99 per cent recycled water, and a minimum of 20 per cent recycled materials in its composition. Silestone has set a new benchmark for sustainability in 2020 with the launch of HybriQ+ technology, which features a drastic reduction of the percentage of crystalline silica content in its composition. The latest Silestone launch is its Ethereal collection, comprising four colours: Ethereal Dusk, Ethereal Haze, Ethereal Glow and Ethereal Noctis.

SHOWROOM LOCATION
Cosentino City Singapore
5 Straits View, Marina One (West Tower),
#01-16/17
PRICE Price on request

photo COSENTINO

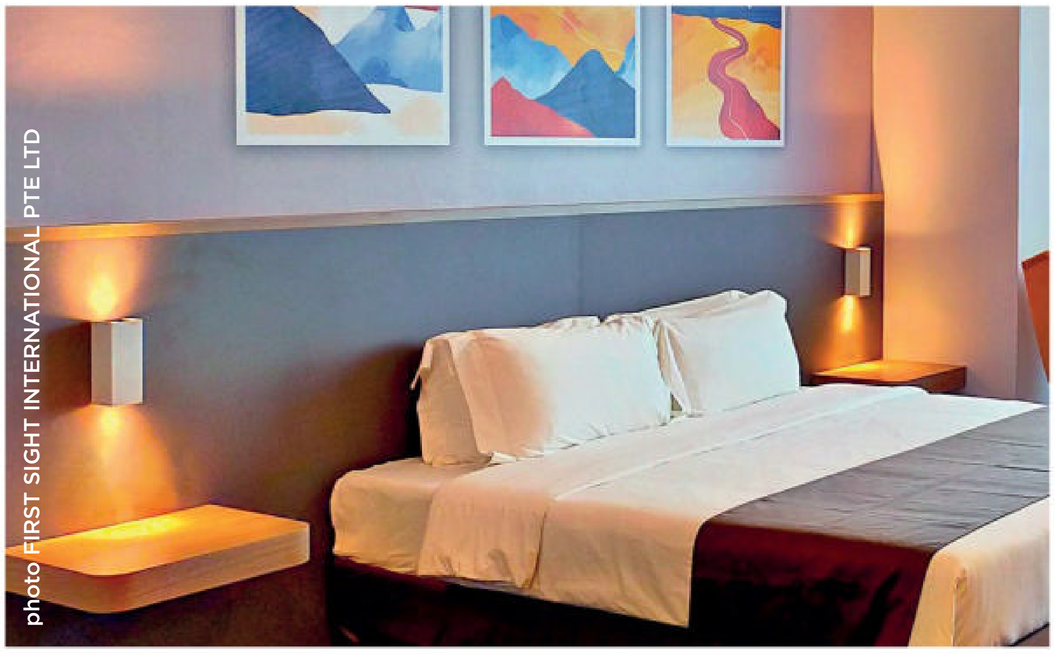


photo FIRST SIGHT INTERNATIONAL PTE LTD

LAMINATES BY SNS

With a range of European and East Asian designs, SNS's collection of laminates offers a wide selection of products suitable for any home. By prioritising and promoting the use of recycled materials, SNS laminates are manufactured from materials sourced as much as possible within the circular economy. SNS laminates are extremely low in VOCs, certified antimicrobial and sourced responsibly. With its commitment to sustainability, SNS also attained the highest rating of four Ticks "Leader", under the certification launched by Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC).

SHOWROOM LOCATION
Tan Boon Liat Building
315 Outram Rd, #12-05
Singapore 169074
PRICE $60.00 and below/1220mm x 2440mm sheet
$188/1220mm x 2440mm sheet (for magnetic series)

photo BOLON

FLOORING BY BOLON

Bolon is a high-performance alternative to carpets with nice textures and beautiful designs. The material is easy to clean and doesn't require any chemicals for general cleaning. All Bolon collections contain recycled content and are produced using 100 per cent sustainable energy. Bolon floors come with a 10-15 years warranty, with the highest green ratings globally. It was awarded the Singapore Green Building Product Certificate in January 2023.

SHOWROOM LOCATION
Xtra
6 Raffles Boulevard
#02-48 Marina Square
PRICE Price on request

FLOORING BY POLYFLOR

The Expona Simplay Pur vinyl floor tiles feature designs inspired by natural wood, stone and abstract effects available in an adhesive-free (in most cases), ready to lay product, designed to reduce installation time. The product is ideal in high usage home areas like living rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and entrance halls. All Expona flooring has been prescribed CE mark, as a European declaration of performance and is regularly tested by external third parties to ensure the exceptional standards are continually met. ■

SHOWROOM LOCATION
Lot 2D Jalan Kilang 51/215, Section 51, 46050 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan
PRICE $35-$119 per square metre (for luxury vinyl planks and tiles)

KICK-START YOUR JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING WITH YOUR CHOICE OF ECO-FRIENDLY RENO MATERIALS FOR YOUR HOME.

photo POLYFLOR

text OLHA ROMANIUK

TRENDING

BEST BOOKCASES

Trying to find a way to store your growing library? Check out these svelt shelving designs for holding and displaying your favourite titles. Who says bookworms can't be stylish!

1. Plane Shelf, $1,290, www.starliving.com.sg

2. Eket wall-mounted cabinet combination, $330, www.ikea.com/sg

3. Bleu Kostia console table from Meillart, from $15,685, www.meillart.com

4. Boaxel Shelving Unit, $110, from www.ikea.com/sg

BRIGHT IDEA

LG's new G3 OLED evo televisions offer impressive brightness with their proprietary Brightness Booster Max technology – increasing brightness to a staggering 70 per cent. The TV's pixel-by-pixel control enhances image sharpness and realism while its ultra-seamless One Wall Design integrates seamlessly into any living space. These TVs are made lighter with composite fibre material, and the A3 and B3 models provide budget-friendly options without sacrificing quality as well.

Available at LG official Shopee, Lazada and authorised retailers – Audio House, Best Denki, Courts, Gain City, Harvey Norman, Mega Discount Store and Parisilk.

PERFECTLY PURE

Touted as Singapore's Smartest Water Purifier, the Sterilux Aurra Pro 2 is powered by Snaptec Technologies and offers a modern 7" touchscreen display, customisable water temperature, and captivating themes. With the Snaptec Connect app, track your water consumption, optimise maintenance, and earn rewards. The quadruple nanofiltration system ensures clean water, along with features like unlimited hot and cold water as well as an energy-saving mode.

Priced at $2,888, available from steriluxe.com

SMART & HOT

Ariston's latest range of WI-FI electric storage water heaters is integrated with smart home platforms like Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant, allowing users to easily control the water heater, adjust the temperature, and receive temperature information through voice commands. Additionally, Ariston ANDRIS2 TOP 30 WI-FI and SL2 20/30 LUX-D WI-FI are equipped with a patented full-titanium heating element that comes with a lifetime warranty, energy-saving Smart ECO EVO function and AG+ technology that inhibits bacteria proliferation for better hygiene.

Available now at all authorised dealers from $399; ANDRIS LUXWI-FI15/30 will be available from June 2023.

TACTILE SOUND

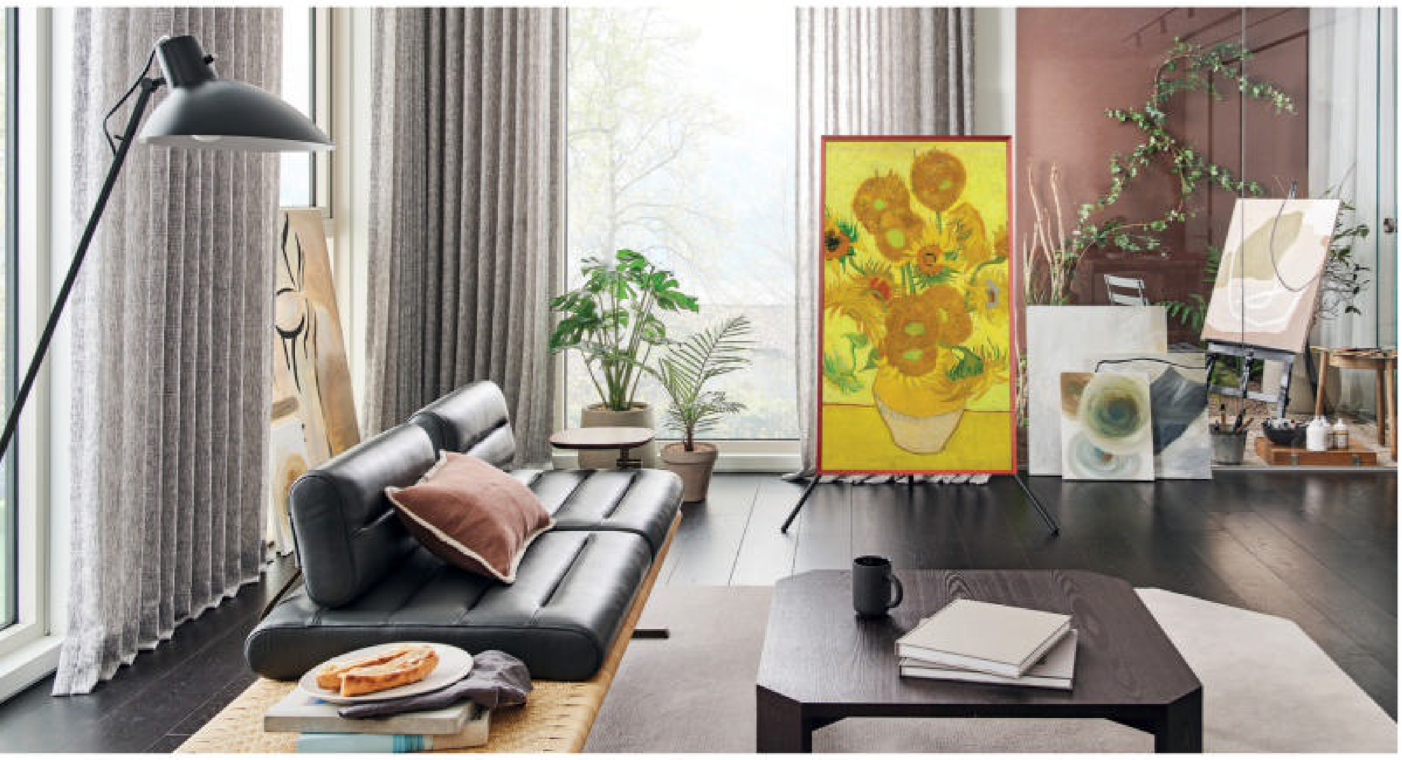
The portable Beosound A5 speaker by Bang & Olufsen, designed in collaboration with renowned Danish/Italian designers GamFratesi, speaker combines immersive sound, meticulous craftsmanship, and product longevity. With a Scandinavian aesthetic and distinct design signature, Beosound A5 is a versatile speaker that can be used at home or taken outside. It features a solid oak handle, IP65 water and dustproof rating, and over 12 hours of playtime. Despite its diminutive size, the powerful four-way driver setup and digital amplifiers deliver 280 watts of dynamic 360-degree sound.

The Beosound A5 retails from $1,499 from www.bang-olufsen.com/en/sg and its local showroom.

GOING GLOBAL

Sol Luminaire's latest Boba series are globe luminaires inspired by the beloved boba drink. Available in 100mm and 135mm sizes for commercial and residential spaces, these can also be upgraded to a gold finish The sandblasted globe emits a nuanced glow reminiscent of iridescent pearls, adding a captivating quality. The Boba Series illuminates at 3000K warm white and offers dim to warm technology that can be adjusted from 3000K to 1800K for a cosy sunset ambience.

Prices start from $89, available at Sol Luminaire, 395 Guillemard Road, Tel: 6612-1221, www.solluminaire.com.sg and Galerie 5 (50 Craig Road), Tel: 6610-7221.



CLAIM TO FRAME

A stylish addition to Samsung's Lifestyle TV lineup, The Frame offers exceptional visual quality and customisable bezel designs (which is how the TV gets its name). It can be wall-mounted or placed on the Simple Stand or Studio Stand for versatility. The updated Art Store provides a wide selection of global artworks to display, including pieces from Singaporean and Southeast Asian artists. The Frame can also display personal photos through the My Photo feature. With a Matte Display, Samsung's Quantum Dot technology, and Quantum Processor 4K, The Frame delivers vivid details and eliminates glare.

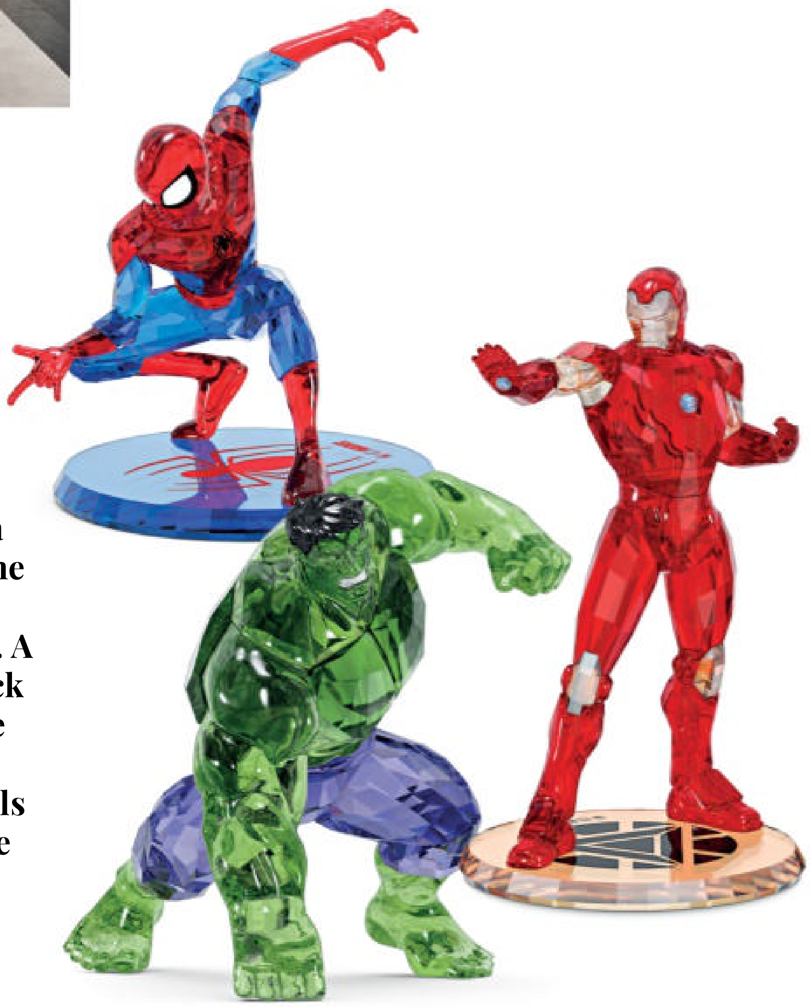
Prices start from $1,599, available at all authorised online and offline retail partners. For more information, visit www.samsung.com/sg

EDITOR'S CHOICE

ACTION PACKED

Marvel and Swarovski have joined forces to introduce a home collection inspired by iconic Marvel characters. The crystal brand's meticulous craftsmanship brings each Super Hero to life with incredible detail and authenticity. A limited-edition collection, figurines of Spider-Man, Black Panther, Captain Marvel, Iron Man, and Hulk showcase the characters' distinctive attributes. These exquisite collectibles, adorned with thousands of sparkling crystals and facets, embody the strength and heroism that define Marvel's beloved characters.

Available online and in Swarovski stores.



ROCK ON

Makers of intelligent home robots, The Roborock adds to its fan favorite Roborock S8 Series with the S8 Pro Ultra. The S8 Series features the VibraRise 2.0 Mopping System, which utilises high-frequency micro scrubs for efficient floor cleaning and boasts powerful suction up to 6000Pa and dual rubber roller brushes to prevent hair tangles and enhance dirt pickup. The S8 Pro Ultra comes with the advanced RockDock Ultra system, offering automatic mop cleaning, dust emptying, refilling, and self-cleaning features, along with a warm air-drying function to maintain cleanliness.

Prices start from $1,739.90, on the brand's official stores on Shopee and Lazada.

FAN SERVICE

Mistral's new Greenleaf collection prioritises affordability, accessibility, and environmental sustainability. The collection includes three models of fans made with eco-friendly materials and 100 per cent recyclable packaging. Equipped with long-lasting and energy-efficient DC motors, these fans comprising of two stand fans and one table fan, come with a 10-year warranty. Each product goes through rigorous monitoring processes and adherence to high environmental standards like BSCI and ISO Framework.

Ranging from $128-209, available at all authorised online and offline retail partners, Mayer Showrooms and official online stores.

MAKING SCENTS

Trudon's new collection, Master Tseng x Trudon is a collaboration by creative director Julien Pruvost, with legendary tea master Yu Hui Tseng, to create candles that embody the richness and beauty of tea. The collection explores the journey of water, highlighting its connection to tea as its spirit with elements of earth and sky. Capturing the tea's natural magic and spiritual depths, the trio include Sous un Ciel de Pétales (Under a Sky of Petals), L'Esprit de L'Eau (The Spirit of Water) and Terre à Terre (Earth to Earth).

Available at escentials ION, escentials Paragon, escentials TANGS at Tang Plaza, escentials.com and TANGS.com.

INSPIRED LIVING

Royal Selangor's latest collection comprises a gathering of beautifully designed pieces for enhancing all aspects of daily living, from the beautifully embellished Woodland shaving set to the intricate details of the Panther Hip Flask. We particularly like the look of the Java Coffee Dripper and mugs, which exude a sleek Art-Deco vibe. Get them to reward yourself for a life well lived.

Inspire 2023 collection retails from $210 for the hip flask to $620 for the Woodland Shaving Set, from Royal Selangor.

BETTER THAN EVER

Touted as Miele's most powerful cordless vacuum, the Triflex HX2's patented 3-in-1 PowerUnit design, consisting of a motor assembly, a rechargeable battery, and a dust box, can be reconfigured in just a few seconds. If the PowerUnit is fitted at the top, the unit lends itself to vacuuming under furniture or along the ceiling. When fitted close to the floor, the centre of gravity shifts, providing the perfect balance for vacuuming large areas without experiencing fatigue. In this configuration, the Triflex can also stand upright unsupported. Pet owners will also find the Triflex HX2 Cat&Dog model particularly useful.

The Triflex HX2 retails for $1,199, available from the Miele showroom. Visit www.miele.sg for more information.

TOTAL MASTER CHEF

You may know Smeg for its iconic retro-style fridges, but did you know the brand also offers a whole suite of stellar kitchen equipment ranging from hobs to ovens? The Omnichef oven, from the Galileo collection, impresses with its multicooking technology, combining traditional, steam and microwave cooking. Different cooking methods can be programmed and triggered to operate one after another or simultaneously without the need to reset temperature and duration parameters. Less time managing your cooking means more time for your family at meal times!

Omnichef (All-in-One) oven range retails for $9,380, available from the Smeg showroom.

LIFE BY CITY ENERGY

A first-of-its-kind lifestyle retail store designed to mimic an actual home, the experiential showroom is conveniently located at Plaza Singapura.

City Energy is Singapore's first and only piped gas provider that's been in operation since 1861. Today, it supplies gas to over 880,000 Singaporean residents and customers for commercial and industrial use.

Two years ago in 2021, City Energy celebrated its 160 anniversary and went through a rebranding, shedding its aged City Gas identity for a newer green and smart energy solutions provider named City Energy.

"Life by City Energy is designed for customers to build the low-carbon homes and kitchens of the future," says Perry Ong, Chief Executive Officer of City Energy at the new store opening.

Featuring nine experiential zones showcasing sustainable and smart home solutions at Life by City Energy at Plaza Singapura, the retail showroom features a typical home setting, making it easier for visitors to learn how the various gadgets and appliances can help enhance their own domain.

Here, you'll learn more about energy saving, and low-carbon footprint smart home accessories. You'll also be able to try your hands at the many appliances paired with smart accessories. Home appliance brands available include Ariston, Casa, Ferroli, Habitap, LG, Kuche, Macro, Mayer, Mowe, Rinnai, and Whirlpool.

The showroom also provides information on City Energy's electric vehicle (EV) charging facilities and network with its Go by City Energy simulation of EV charging. ■

1. The customer service zone features a tranquil green garden.

2. Get hands-on testing of the low-carbon appliances at the smart kitchen setup by Moewe.

Life by City Energy is located at Plaza Singapura, #03-77/78. Find out more at www.cityenergylife.com.sg

1
CityEnergy
As Singapore's piped town gas provider trusted by generations since 1861, City Energy is building a greener, smarter future for all.

2
Möwe Smart Kitchen
möwe
Rinnai

text JYN TEO photos CITY ENERGY

HINOKI HOUSE NO.3

Pritzker laureate Ryue Nishizawa employs traditional Japanese architecture to create a meditative timber retreat in Karuizawa for Shishi-Iwa House.

Hospitality brand Shishi-Iwa House boasts a collective of intimate crafted retreats, fusing a mastery of contemporary architecture, design, and art with culinary tastemaking and a deep connection with nature. SSH No.3, its latest launch, is a mountain nature retreat for families and friends to spend quiet time together without the interruption of urban life and to inspire the regeneration of intellectual creativity.

SSH No.03 follows SSH No.01 and SSH No.02, opened in 2018 and in 2022 respectively, and designed by another Pritzker Prize laureate Shigeru Ban. All three houses are situated mere minutes on foot from the other, with guests encouraged to share common facilities. The three houses present a unique opportunity for guests to compare different architecture styles by these master architects.

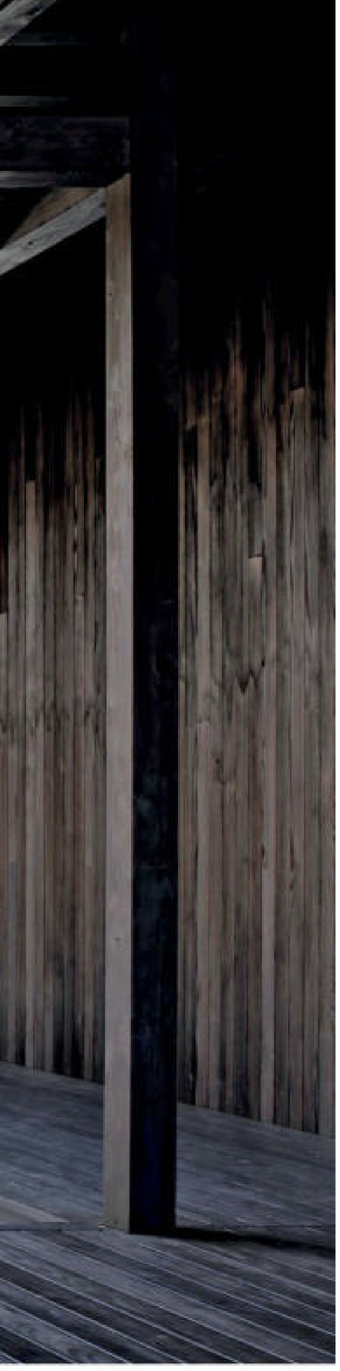
Promoting the harmonious coexistence of architecture and nature, the houses are

TOP
The rooms are connected by interwinding walkways.

ABOVE
The house is designed for personal wellness and comfort.

RIGHT
Guests can choose to imbibe of the traditional tatami room experience or the modern western-style suite.

OPPOSITE, TOP
The standalone suites mean natural light shines from all sides of the unit during the day.

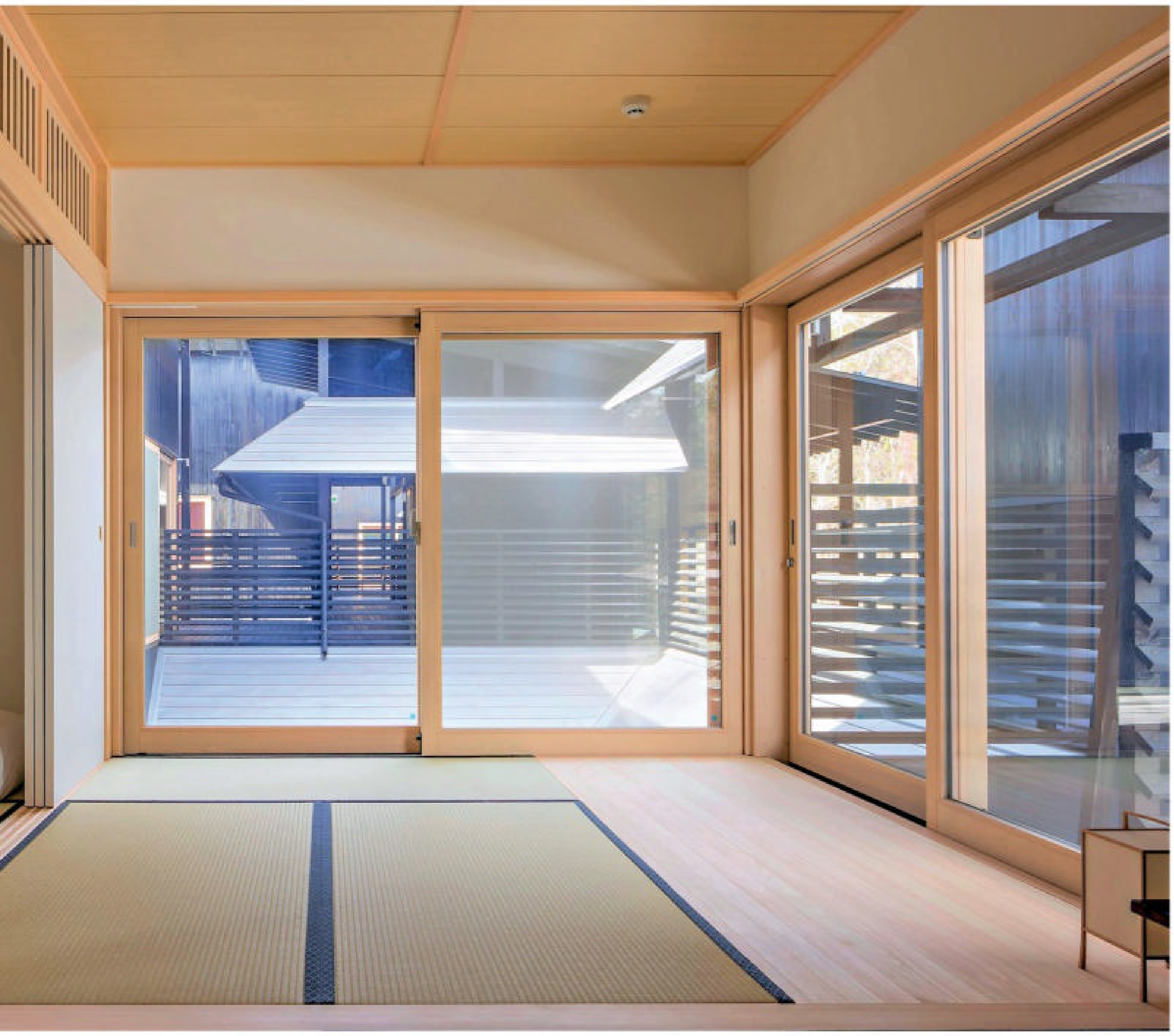


good to know

SSH No.03 features a collection of antique Japanese as well as vintage mid-century modern furniture by Charles and Ray Eames among others.

designed to connect the guests to their natural surroundings while celebrating simplicity in its purest form.

SSH No.03 comprises of 10 pavilions interconnect by a series of engawa (covered walkways) and garden courtyards. The retreat is exclusive with only 10 guest rooms and one cabin villa offering both Superior Rooms (western style) and Tatami Suites. Inspired by spatial transparency as well as Ma, the Japanese concept of negative space, Ryue deliberately creates empty areas through minimal furnishings and embellishments, allowing natural light to stream continuously through the rooms' windows. All guest rooms are stand-alone units with open windows on all four walls, affording guests with unparalleled connection with the surrounding forest and internal Japanese gardens.



All units also come with a wrapped terrace, extending seamlessly the boundaries from the inside to the outside.

The revered hinoki cypress wood features prominently throughout SSH No.03. Sourced from Gifu prefecture, Ryue deploys the distinctive shade and fragrance of the rare wood to both the structure and the interiors of the retreat, including fixed furnishings, resulting in a breathtakingly austere visual impact upon entering the room.

Four Japanese courtyards plotted along the walkway are designed to create moments of stillness, completing a spiritual journey in which guests become one with nature – and with themselves.

SSH No.03's location within the serene Karuizawa Yacho no Mori, the National Wild Bird Sanctuary, in the embrace of almost 100 hectares of lush forest, naturally expands moments of rejuvenation, with forest bathing and special walking tours such as a waterfall trail, art and architecture tours, and farm excursions. ■

For more information, visit www.shishiiwahouse.jp/en/

photos **KENICHI SUZUKI**

MIYUE · BLUE & WHITE ISLAND POOL HOMESTAY

Located along the shores of Nan Ao subdistrict in Guangdong, China, the Blue & White homestay by Miyue is an absolute treat for the senses.

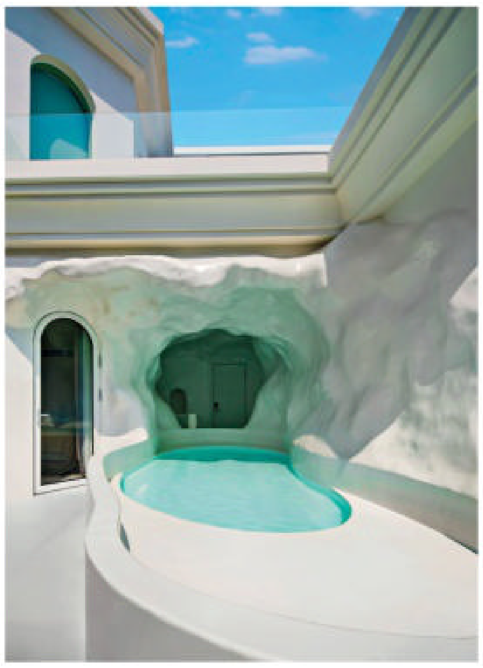
Shenzhen may be better known as an industrial metropolis, but lying less than an hour away from the bustling city is the idyllic coastal town of Nan Ao. Here, time slows to a crawl along the rocky coastline as foamy waves rush gently to the shore and fluffy white clouds hang lazily overhead for most of the day.

This offers the ideal setting for Miyue's latest resort concept. Designed by GS Design, the Blue & White Cliffside Resort redefines the concept of an elegant vacation by creating a rustic space that blends beautifully into the surrounding.

The design of the homestay is inspired by the innocence of childhood memories, comprising simple forms and soft colours. Surrounded by breahtaking vistas on all sides, the design team ensured that every opening in the homestay offers a picture-perfect view.

The palette consists of pure white, complemented by shades of blue to tie in with the hues of the sky and sea.

Natural textures abound, from the soft sheets the the wooden chairs and straw carpets. There overwhelming sense of being back



ABOVE
The design of the rooms are simple yet stylish.

TOP RIGHT
In- and Outdoor spaces blend harmoniously within the homestay.

RIGHT
Manmade cave pools are a feature of this homestay.

FAR RIGHT
The resort sits atop the rocky cliffs along the coastline.

OPPOSITE
Arched doorways frame the beautiful sights of the scenery.

in nature allows the guests to kick back and relax.

All of the resort's 25 rooms have a unique interior design and character, with the core element of each one being the different caves and baths which provide spectacular framed views of the landscape.

Developed with the aim of achieving a memorably visual, tactile, and auditory experience, they connect guests to the natural world, as well as a liberating simplicity and freedom.

Surrounded by lush greenery, the intimate homestay combines the best that nature has to offer, along with all the creature comforts of modern living. It is hard to imagine that just across the South-China sea lies Hong Kong, the pearl of the Orient that never sleeps.

If you are yearning for an escape from digital technology or the hectic pace of life in the city, drop by this resort to learn how to take life one day at a time once more. ■

For more information, visit www.gengshangdesign.com

good to know

Nan Ao island is known for its pristine beauty and natural attractions. The island is home to the Nan Ao dialect, which is part of the broader Teochew dialect. The region is also situated close to Taiwan.

photos AOXIANG

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DESIGN

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION FROM THOSE IN THE KNOW

FROM THE DEEP SEA TO THE COSMOS

One of Lebanon's most celebrated contemporary artists, Nabil Nahas speaks to Y-JEAN MUN-DELSALLE about starfish, fractals, geometry and the infinity of the universe. Nabil Nahas has stars in his eyes, or rather starfish, to be exact. ▶

photo JOYCE NG GILLES

1

photo FARZAD OWRANG

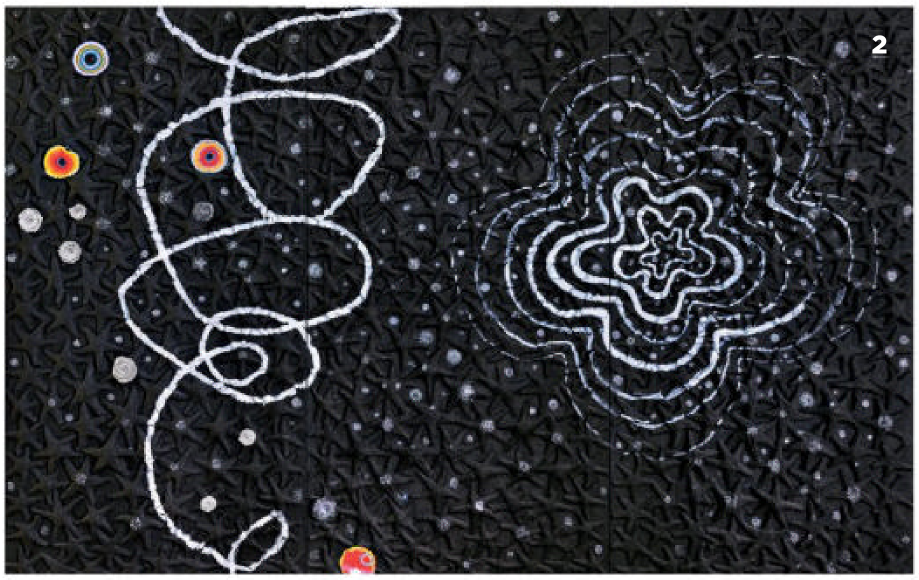
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photo COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CHATEAU LA COSTE

We're gazing at the Lebanese-American artist's gargantuan paintings on display in his first solo exhibition in France. Curated by Joanna Chevalier of CMS Collection, Grounded in the Sky runs until 13 June 2023 at Chateau La Coste winery, this marvel of art and architecture encompassing over 40 major works of contemporary art on a 500-acre site set amidst an idyllic Provençal landscape lined with grapevines, cypresses, stone pines, olive trees and ancient oaks. What he calls "sea stars" pave the entire backdrop of these canvases. In fact, he's been obsessed with starfish ever since he saw thousands of them littered across a beach in front of his house in the Hamptons on Long Island in the wake of Hurricane Bob in 1991, which triggered his Fractal series. Initially mounting real starfish to his canvases instinctively, they are today composed of cast acrylic paint. His five-pointed starfish that form a polygon are the basic pattern of the golden section and Islamic geometry, which is itself derived from nature.

Nabil may be known for his three-dimensional, multi-layered paintings vibrating with vivid colour – using only high-grade natural pigments like cadmium, cobalt, stainless steel, crushed mica or graphite – and texture in the form of pumice powder, suggestive of coral or biological growth, but he has never sought to imitate nature, only to mimic the way it operates, like how an oyster grows – by accretion. "I'm not interested in copying what nature looks like, but in the process that nature has and replicating that," he states. "It came out of observing nature – my antennas pick up things – and maybe now some things I'm doing are beginning to make sense. I'm not an intellectual when I paint at all. I don't have theories; it's all instinct."

Developing diverse vocabularies throughout his

1. Nabil at work on one of his huge canvases.

2. *The starfish silhouette features prominently in his works.*

3. *Nabil's creations straddle the border between two and three dimensions.*

4. *An untitled piece from Nabil's Grounded in the Sky show.*

5. Nabil's style takes inspiration from the shapes and colours seen in nature.

artistic career spanning more than five decades, Nahas constantly navigates between various series, advancing in circles rather than linearly. Over time, these languages converged through his unexpected fusions of geometry and nature, thereby propelling himself into uncharted territory. Take for example his spiral/tree diptychs depicting the connection between the infinitely large and the infinitely small. "Why limit yourself to one signature if you have the ability of having five signatures?" he questions. Looking at his paintings today, they embrace the dichotomy between figuration and abstraction. Considering himself to be an abstract painter profoundly inspired by the natural world – his

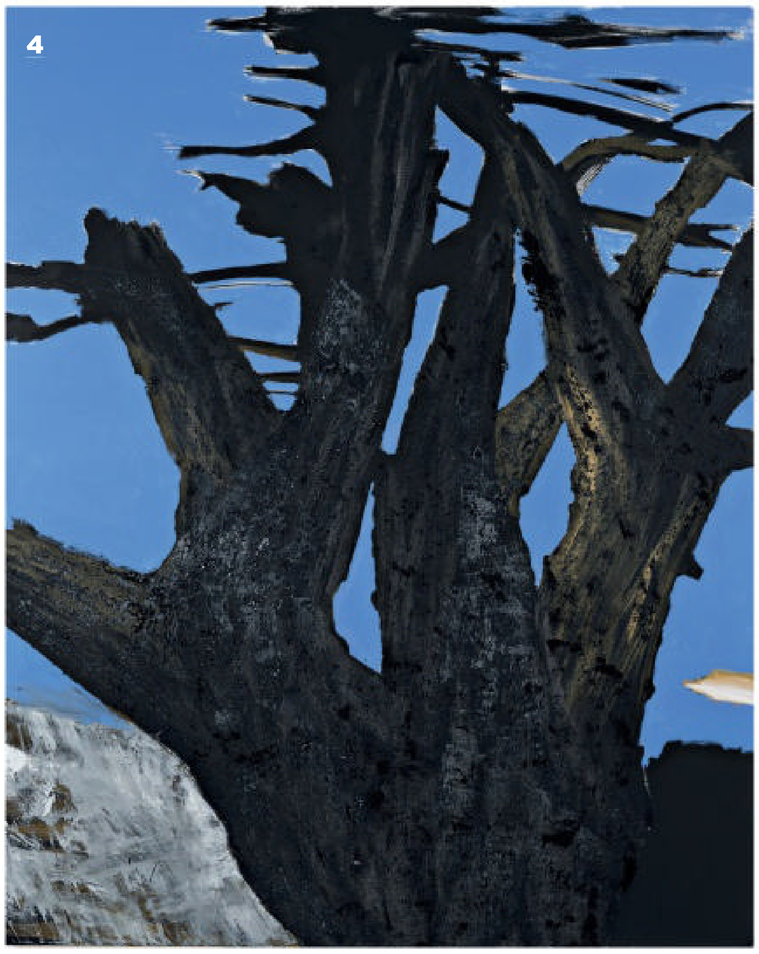
▶

3

photo JOYCE NG GILLES

"I'M NOT INTERESTED IN COPYING WHAT NATURE LOOKS LIKE, BUT IN THE PROCESS THAT NATURE HAS AND REPLICATING IT."

4



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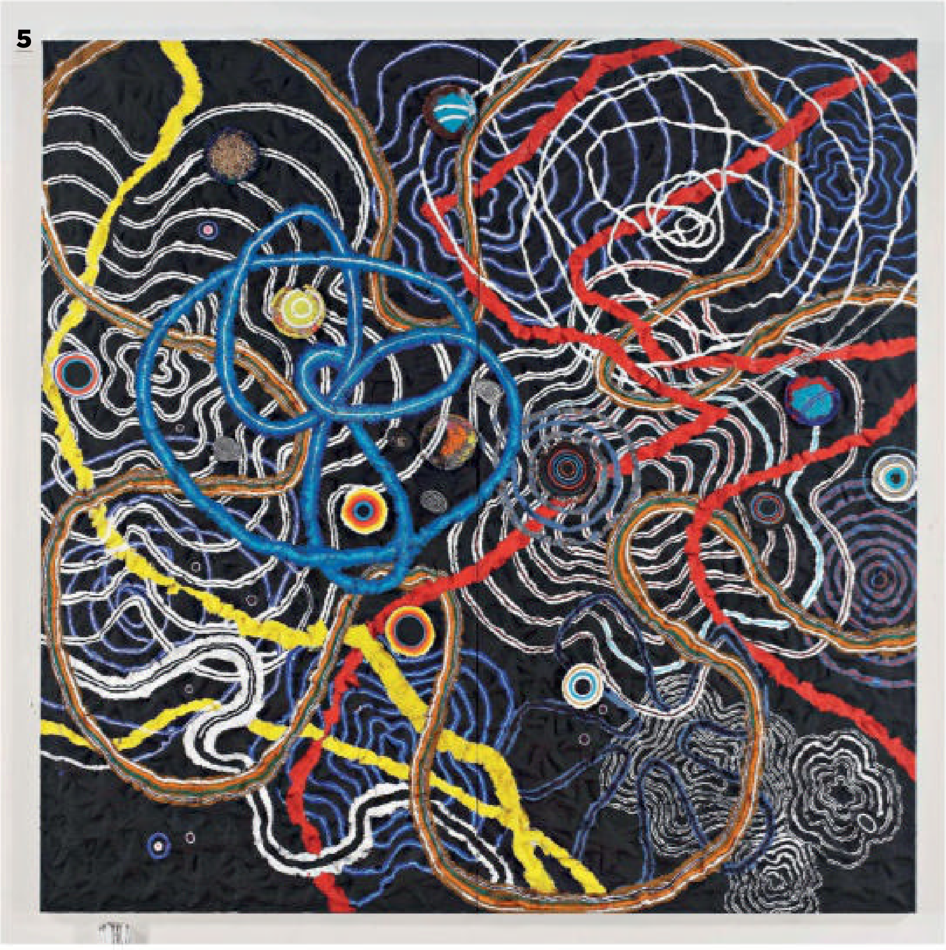
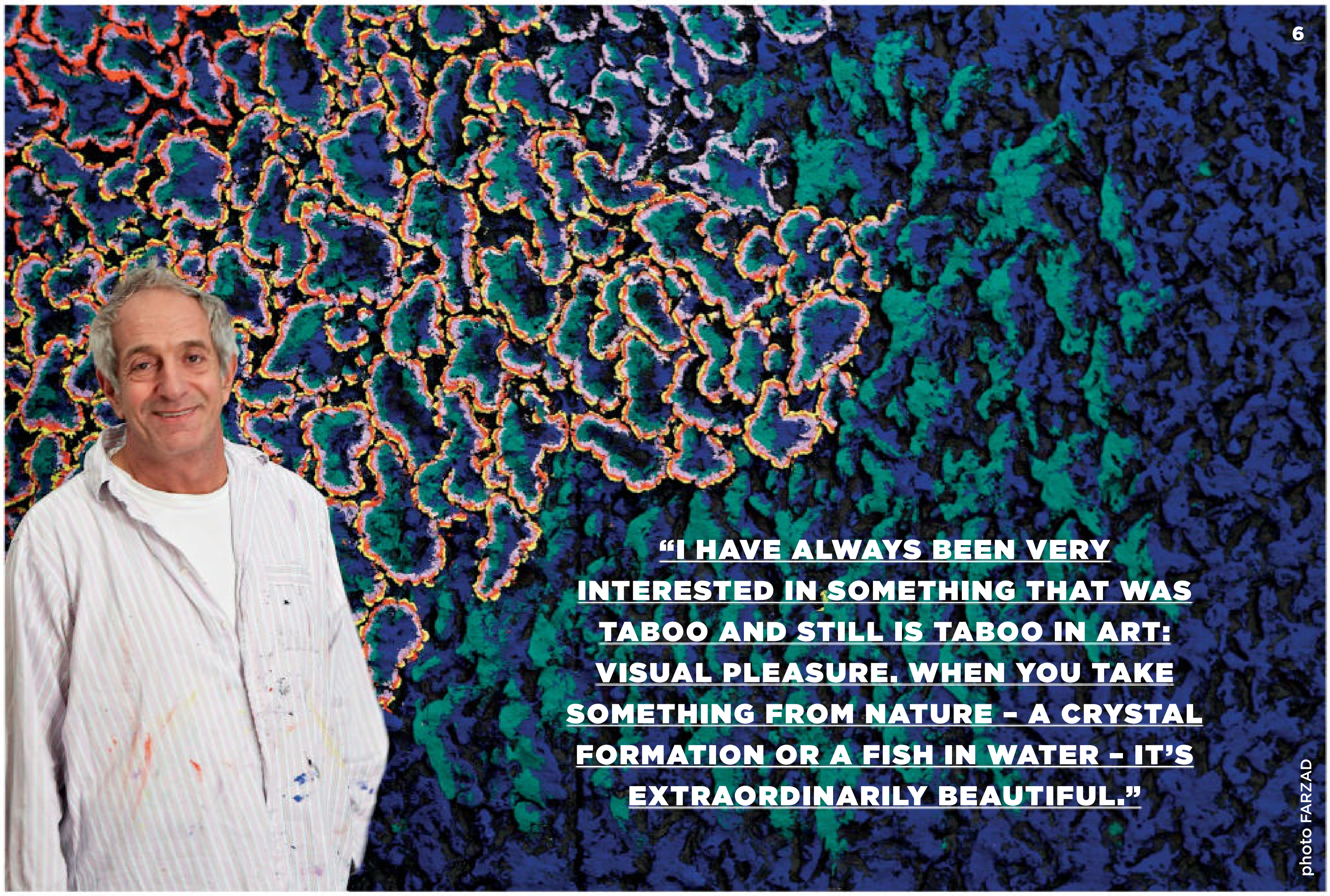


first geometric paintings from the 1970s were inspired by crystalline structures, arabesque geometry and three-dimensional, repetitive pyramidal shapes – he finally returned to Lebanon in 1993 after an 18-year absence due to the civil war.

Enchanted by the Lebanese countryside, Nabil found himself wishing to be a landscape painter. Then in 2006 in his New York studio, he began painting majestic trees emblematic of his homeland – cedars, olives and palms – from memory, which were more botanical portrait than landscape. "Lebanon was very important for me because of the attachment I developed to the land, the geography, the archaeology from a very young age," he explains. "I used to go with my friend Roy to play in the ruins of Byblos. Had I not gone back to Lebanon, I would have never painted those trees, not in a million years."

Grounded in the Sky proposes two series of recent works and a never-before-seen outdoor sculpture – Nabil's largest to date – evoking a mysterious creature from the ocean's depths or from outer space, which are on display across two gallery spaces: the Renzo Piano Pavilion and the Old Wine Storehouse. Large-scale cosmic Constellation compositions, referencing both seabed and sky, appear to be pulsating, in perpetual movement. "What I'm doing is going from the microcosm to the macrocosm," he notes. "I'm trying to duplicate the constant expansion of the universe, on every level. I have always been very interested in something that was taboo and still is taboo in art: visual pleasure. When you take something from nature – a crystal formation or a fish in water – it's extraordinarily beautiful."

Born in Beirut in 1949, Nabil spent the first decade of his life in Cairo, where he was mesmerised by the abundance of complex geometric ornaments



"I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY INTERESTED IN SOMETHING THAT WAS TABOO AND STILL IS TABOO IN ART: VISUAL PLEASURE. WHEN YOU TAKE SOMETHING FROM NATURE – A CRYSTAL FORMATION OR A FISH IN WATER – IT'S EXTRAORDINARILY BEAUTIFUL."

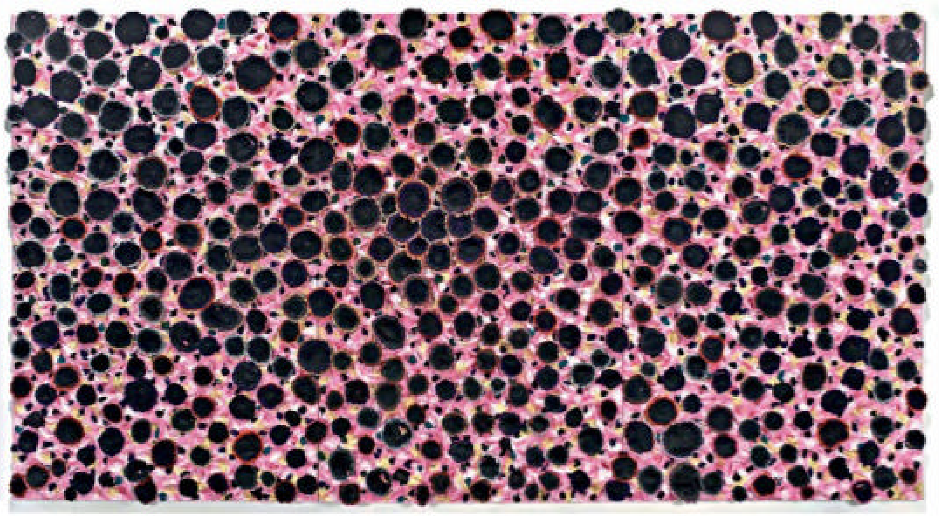
photo FARZAD

in Arabic architecture and decor, before attending boarding school in Lebanon. He started painting at the age of 10, originally encountering abstract painting through his mother's first cousin, Yvette Achkar, a Lebanese pioneer abstractionist. "Skira published a book called Modern Painting. Contemporary Trends," he recalls. "It was a survey of abstraction in Europe and the United States up to 1960, and I got that book. I was 12. It was like a Pandora's box, with images I'd never seen. At the time, I decided that I really liked the New York School: Rothko, Pollock and company. The French, European part, I was quite taken with Henri Michaux's inks, Fautrier and Dubuffet. So for school, I thought, 'I want to go to New York.'"

After moving to the United States in 1968 to study fine art at Louisiana State University then Yale University, where he was immersed in Western abstract painting, Nabil's encounters with contemporary painters of the New York School convinced him to settle in the Big Apple after graduation. Today, he splits his time between New York City and Ain Aar, a village in Lebanon's central mountain range 15 km from Beirut where his grandparents used to live and where he would spend each summer as a child. After buying and rehabilitating his uncle's derelict house there, he started planting trees – even transplanting millennia-old Roman olive trees from southern Lebanon to his property and making his own olive oil – an orchard and a vegetable garden, and surrounding himself with cats, dogs, blue-egg chickens, goats, turtles and salamanders, building a sanctuary that fills him with hope.

Nabil's tortured, apocalyptic tree canvases took on new meaning after the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the tragic Beirut port explosion in 2020 that occurred when he was in his atelier situated in the mountains at 600-metre-high altitude, reminding him of his state of mind after 9/11 when he lived in New York City just five blocks away from the site of the terrorist attacks. In these highly personally interpretations of his childhood environment, his subconscious appears to have taken over and the paintings become the reflection of his emotional state. "They were not intentionally meant to be that," he discloses. "It's like it filtered through me, and I was surprised when I did the first project. Then I kept doing it and realised that it was actually a well-adjusted resolution to the feeling I had from the terrible event." Echoing his monochromatic works from the 1980s, black carbonised trees in a raging forest fire are still proudly standing tall, survivors amidst the fiery red flames.

Critical to the heritage, culture and ecology of his homeland, these trees have now become an integral part of Nabil's identity. He concludes, "I'm very fond of archaeology and I collect a few archaeological pieces, especially pottery. I like sharing an object that is 3,000 or 4,000 years old, having that link between the person who made it and me holding it. With the trees, it's the same link, but they're alive – they're not dead objects. It's amazing to have that link to history, and those poor trees are still witnessing disaster after disaster, and they're still there. I'm very interested in gardens and preserving the wild flora of Lebanon. Once you know how olive trees grow because this tree has a certain way of growing, you can grow them yourself on canvas. They're you, they're me, they're somebody. They've become a major part of my work." ■



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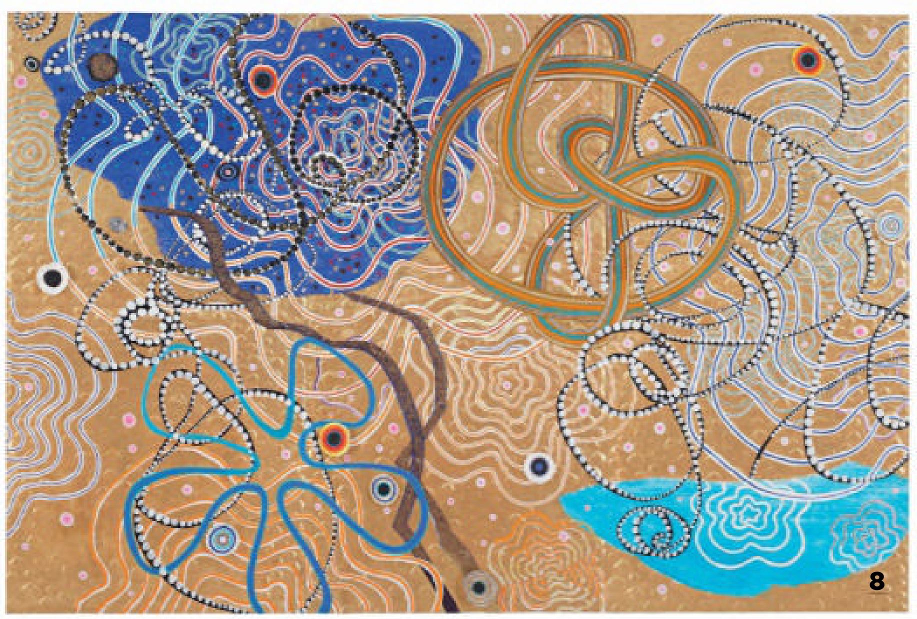


8

6. Nabil spends his time in New York and a village in Lebanon.

7. His works are also influenced by world events, such as the pandemic and 9/11.

8. The artist is a lover of archaeology and history.

photo COURTESY OF NAHAS STUDIO

ADDRESSING ARCHITECTURE'S BIG ISSUES IN SINGAPORE

Paul Finch, Programme Director of the World Architecture Festival (WAF), on how the event is going to tackle key issues faced by the architecture community and why it's worth a visit for everyone interested in design.

World Architecture Festival, plus its sister event Inside: World Festival of Interiors, will be back in Singapore this year, after a seven-year spell in European cities.

Launched in 2008 in Barcelona, the festival is a three-day annual celebration of great architecture and design from around the world. The key element from the beginning was an awards programme, with shortlisted entrants required to present their designs live, to international jurors and festival delegates.

The awards format has expanded since its launch and now has four sections - Completed Buildings, Future Projects, Interiors and Landscape, with a total of 43 categories.

On the first two days of the festival, we have 17 inflatable 'crit' rooms, where the shortlisted architects and designers compete for a 'best-in-breed' award, with up to 17 competitors in each category. On the final day, the 43 winners compete for 'best-in-show' awards, presented at a gala dinner which concludes the festival.

So there are three days of constructive criticism, and a chance for the design community to see how different professionals from across the world are addressing the same sorts of issues: housing, the environment, health, education and so on.

The point is to encourage conversation and comparison – to allow professionals to escape from everyday concerns to focus on what matters to them as designers. You might say the festival is a reminder to delegates of why they fell in love with architecture and design in the first place, and this aspect of the festival is a continuing pleasure to me as its founder.

There has been a considerable degree of continuity in our programmes, though welcome changes have included the greater percentage of women judges and speakers, and the introduction of the World Festival of Interiors in 2011.

In addition to the awards programme, we also have two busy conference stages where we host sessions featuring contributors from across the world. On our main stage, we have a thematic conference, while on the secondary stage we focus on future projects, and the ideas addressing key challenges facing society, for example Climate and Carbon; Social Equity; Food and Water and so on. The contributors are the winners of our WAFX Awards, which focus on those big global challenges.

Our main stage theme this year is 'Catalyst', and is intended to focus on the way in which architecture and design can bring about transformational improvements in the way we live, work and play, by acting as a sort of accelerator, speeding up necessary change which is starting to happen but needs a push.

Design can bring about change in many different ways. It can absorb changing patterns from the world of housing or office development or shopping, and go on to produce designs which reflect those changes, allowing new patterns of use.

An example of this might be the way in which we think about housing units, especially

1., 2. The three-day event includes a series of competitions and break-out discussions.

3. Held in Singapore, this year's events will see design lovers from around the world converging to participate.

World
Architecture
Festival
3

World
Architecture
Festival 2022
World Festival
of Interiors 2022
Insid
1

CRIT
ROOM
8
2

in a post-pandemic world, where there is a greater emphasis on open space for exercise, and more attention paid to how we might work at home in a more efficient way. Do you sacrifice a second bathroom in favour of a study? Should apartment blocks have communal workspace? Should every apartment have a balcony?

Then there is the question of approaching design differently, on the basis of research into elements, such as colour and light, both artificial and natural, and the look and feel of interior spaces. For designers, what they (and we) think about these matters can swiftly migrate to the commercial world: for example, how do you create the feelings of comfort and familiarity from the home environment in hotel rooms?

These days, hotel operators are making serious attempts to make their customers feel 'at home' by use of materials, sound, smell and soundtracks, customising the experience of those who can afford it. This can work the other way: how do you take high-end fixtures and fittings in the bathroom back into home life, in a way which is affordable but maintains quality of experience?

Big issues facing us all are the key talking points at WAF, and we expect to review a good cross-section of these at our festival this year. It will be a pleasure to be back in Singapore, where key social and environment issues have been addressed in a creative way since the country's independence from the UK in 1965, leading to a formidable record of housebuilding, the creation of new environments on 'made' or reclaimed land, and the attention given to community health and well-being programmes.

For anybody who has not visited before, a highlight will be the experience of Singapore itself; but for everybody, the most important element of the festival will be the interaction with delegates, speakers, judges and presenters, part of a 'Big Conversation' about the future. As ever, it will be a memorable three days. ■

www.worldarchitecturefestival.com
www.insidefestival.com

good to know

WAF is taking place from 29 November to 1 December, 2023 at Marina Bay Sands. Paul is also the founder of WAF, which he launched in 2008.

Paul Finch, Programme Director of the World Architecture Festival (WAF)

photos **WORLD ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL**

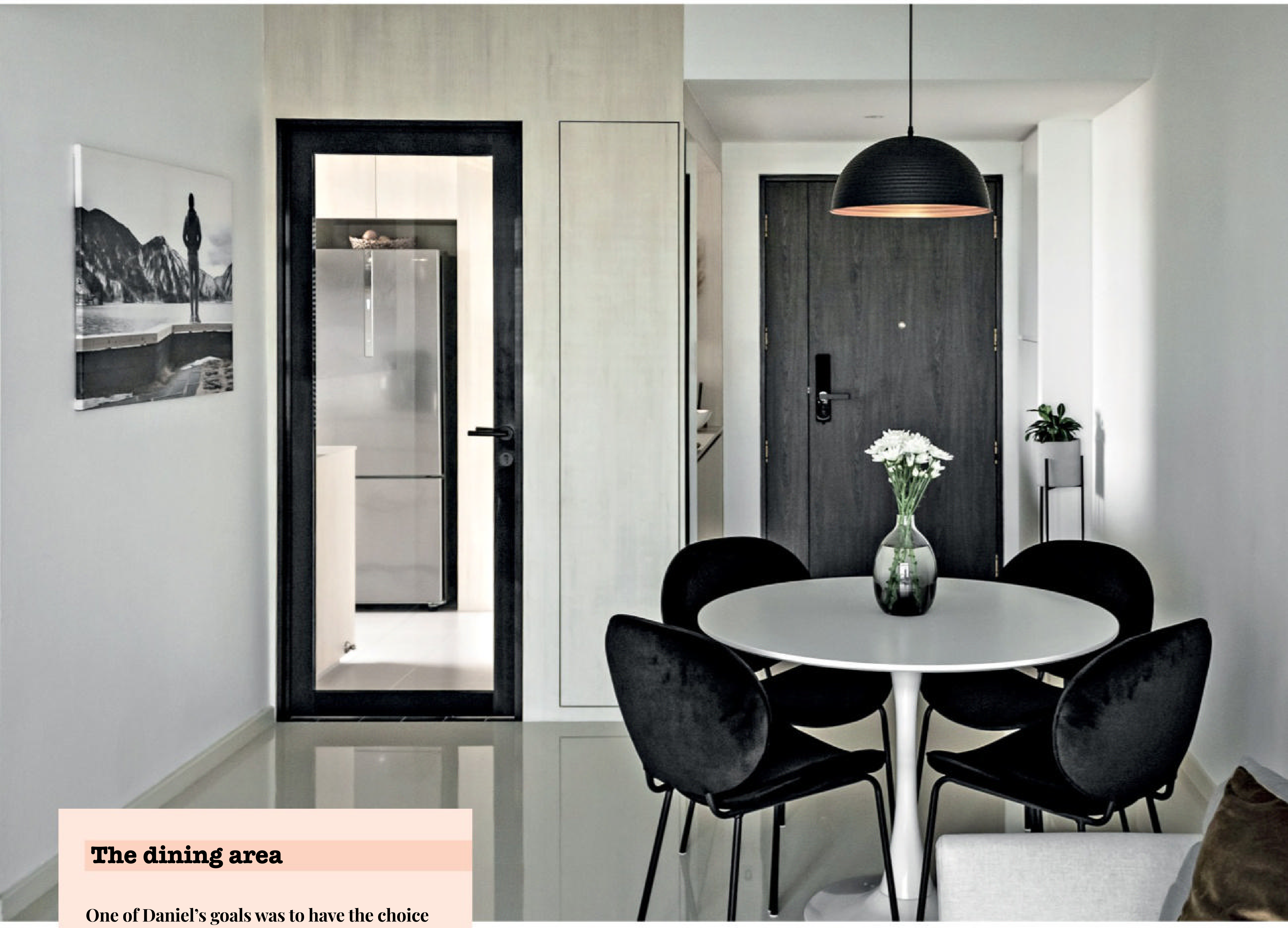
SPACE FOR DISCOVERY

With its minimalist, meditative design that borrows elements from the Japandi style, this resale flat is a grounding space for personal growth and authentic expression. ROSSARA JAMIL explores this soothing retreat.

The living area

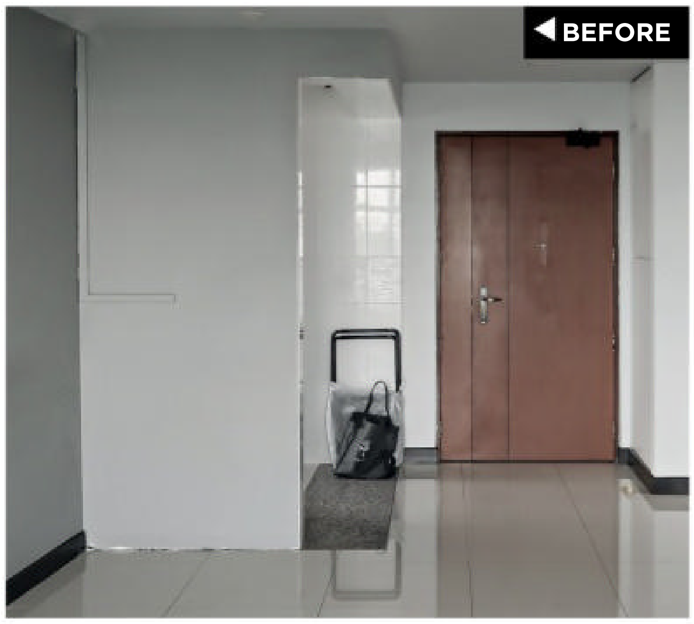
The flat had just reached the Minimum Occupation Period and was generally in good shape. Daniel intended to retain most of the living area and kitchen flooring. It looked dull, so he had the grouting redone with marble gum, which could be polished down so that it sits flush with the tiles for a smooth and uninterrupted look. The walls, too, were smoothened out, with a false wall built over a niche to add to the crisp look. This would give Daniel the freedom to move his furniture around in future. ▶

▶ BEFORE



The dining area

One of Daniel's goals was to have the choice to close the kitchen off when cooking or baking. However, before renovations, the main entrance opened directly into the living area and the kitchen to one side. He also discovered that the kitchen entrance had pebbled flooring at its entrance, which would make installing a door tricky. Instead of removing the awkward flooring, they built a half-height shoe cabinet and installed an internal window to let natural light into the foyer. By shifting the kitchen entrance to face the living area, they could also include a slim bar cabinet built flush with the wall and kitchen door.



Daniel Teo's journey towards home ownership is one that more Singaporeans are experiencing. "I truly thought I'd buy my first home as a couple, perhaps even with a family in tow. So, the entire exercise of home ownership was about learning to take care of myself and my needs in a magnified way," he shares.

The freelance writer began his search with one- and two-bedroom condominium units but chanced upon a Housing and Development Board flat. Not only did it have an unblocked view and situate near his parents' home, but there was also much more room for his interest in baking, cooking, and reading.

Daniel enlisted the help of his long-time friend, Hans Ng, an interior designer from White Ideas to bring his ideas to life. Design-wise, he had a 30-page brief. "I knew there were certain features I definitely wanted in a home that suited my interests and lifestyle, such as a closed-off kitchen," he says. "The original vision for my flat was also much bolder and trendier. At the time in 2020, navy blues and gold accents were fashionable in interior design."

While he was inspired by the trends of that year, he had doubts about having strong colours in his home. He changed his mind just before renovations began. "It was also a very trying period during that first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. I was going through a lot of challenges in my personal and professional lives, so I knew I wanted my first home to be a sanctuary, an oasis of calm," says Daniel, who also practices yoga and meditation regularly. He also began documenting his thoughts on life and homeownership through reflective posts on his Instagram account @stayingonthehill.

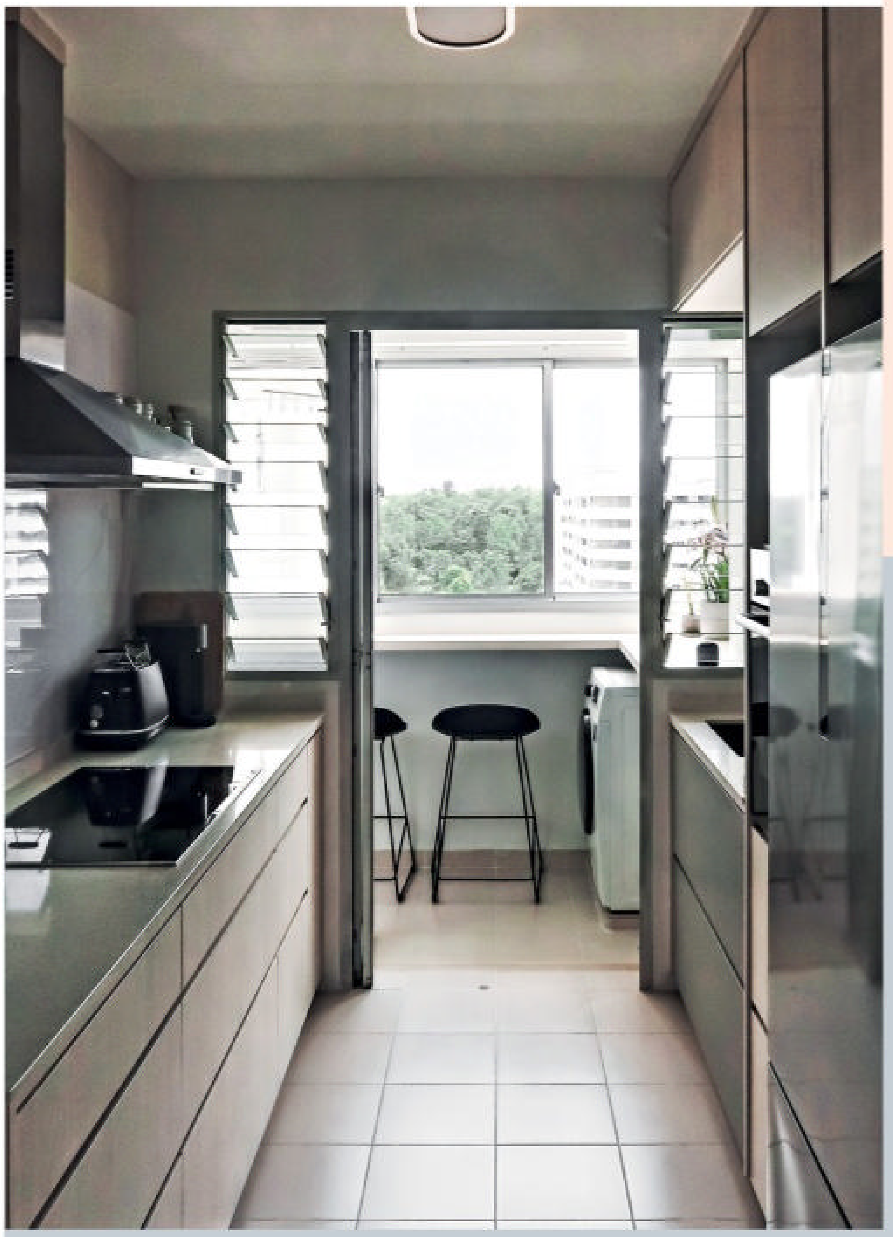
Daniel turned towards minimalist and contemporary ideas, borrowing elements from the Japandi style too. He let go of the bold colours and went with neutral colours that would give his home a sense of timelessness. Midway through the three-month project, he opted for an accent colour and introduced green touches into the home. ▶

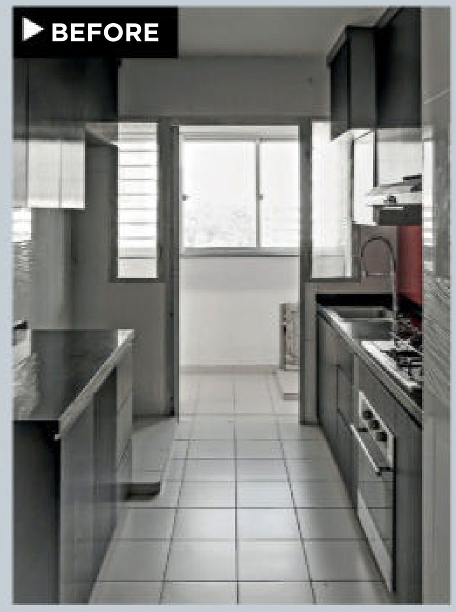
WHO LIVES HERE

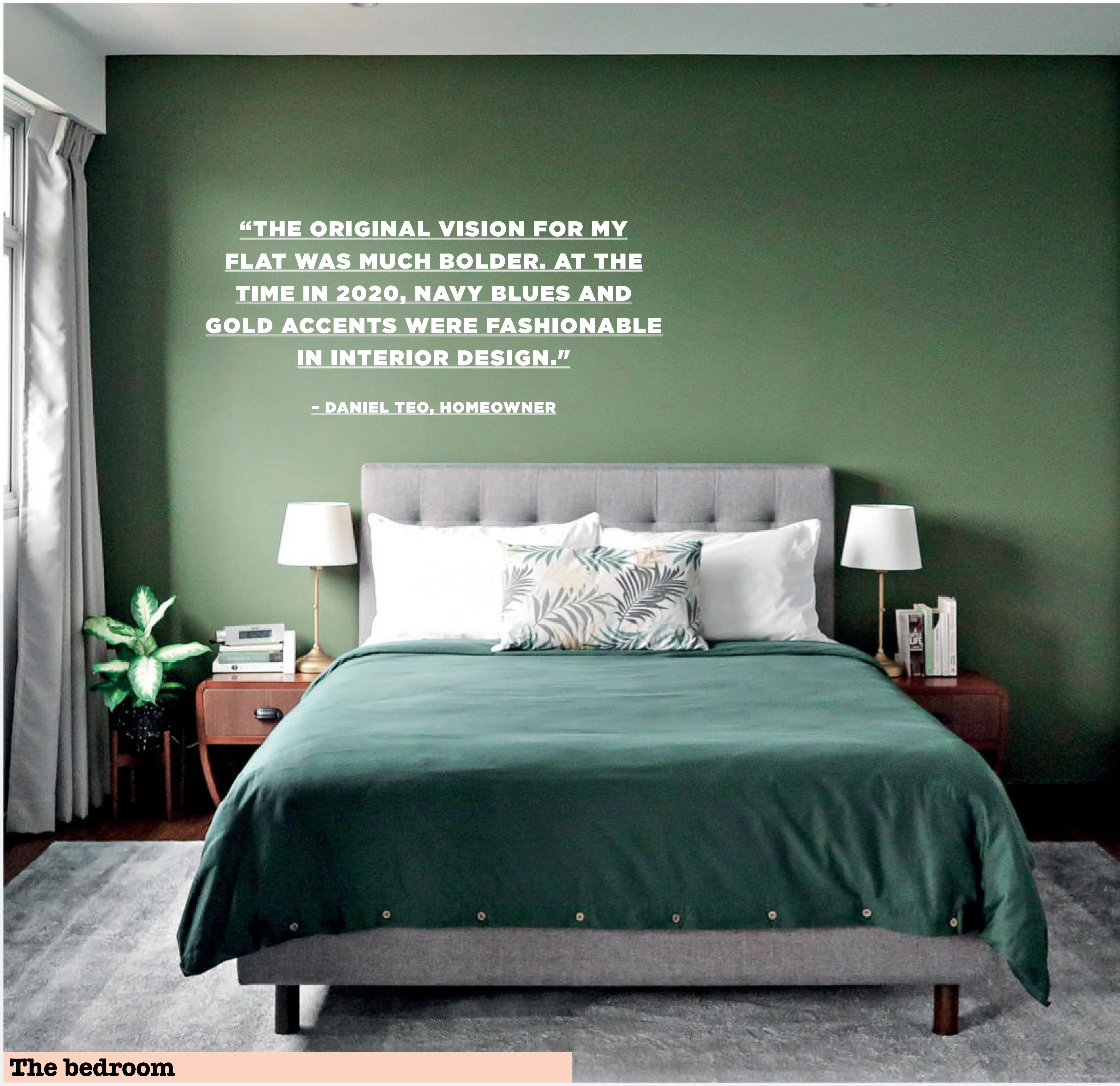
A bachelor in his 30s
HOME A four-room flat in Bukit Panjang
SIZE 1,000 sq ft
ID White Ideas
https://whiteideas.com.sg

The kitchen

Daniel needed ample countertop space, sufficient lighting and a suitable oven for baking and cooking. "We had to reimagine the kitchen layout because the fridge and dish racks blocked off the windows," he shares. The new layout and light palette make the kitchen brighter than before. The service balcony became more than a utilitarian space, with a bar-top counter and seats where he could enjoy his morning cuppa while overlooking the greenery.





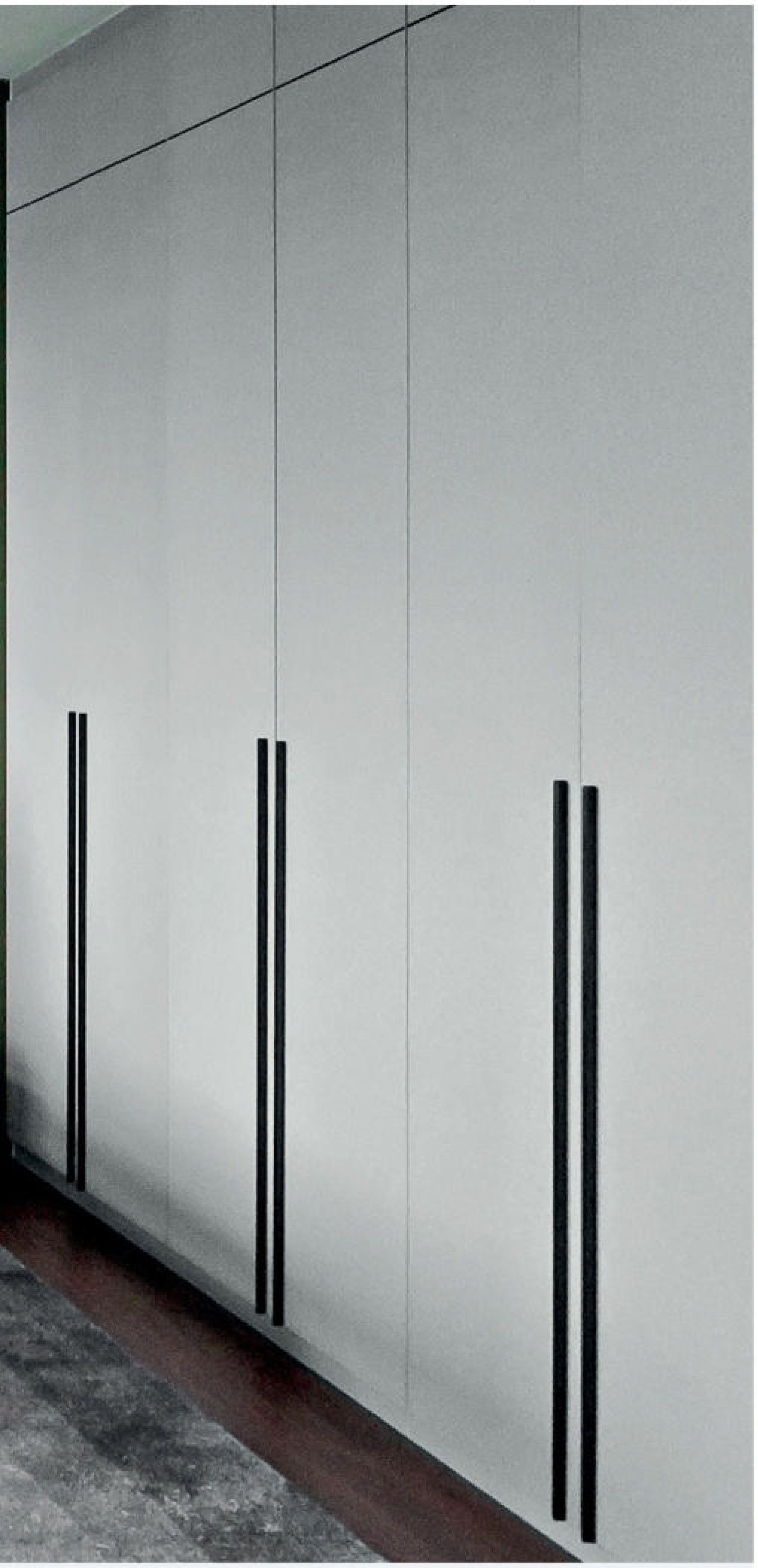


> “THE ORIGINAL VISION FOR MY FLAT WAS MUCH BOLDER. AT THE TIME IN 2020, NAVY BLUES AND GOLD ACCENTS WERE FASHIONABLE IN INTERIOR DESIGN.”
>
> – DANIEL TEO, HOMEOWNER

The bedroom

With plenty of floor area to work with, Daniel had the liberty to design the unit to his needs. At the top of his list was sufficient floor space for his meditation and yoga practice. Combining the master bedroom with the adjacent common bathroom made room for a reading and meditation corner he could step to upon waking up. Crisp white and wood-looking vinyl flooring renewed the brightly coloured walls and old flooring.

Embracing home ownership and having his own space since his move in June 2021 has done wonders for Daniel. He says, “Almost two years on, my flat is still somewhere that brings me a lot of peace, joy, and validation. I’m living in a space that is the result of me choosing me. I now believe that wherever I am, with whatever I have, I can create a home for myself. And that is a very empowering thought to have.”



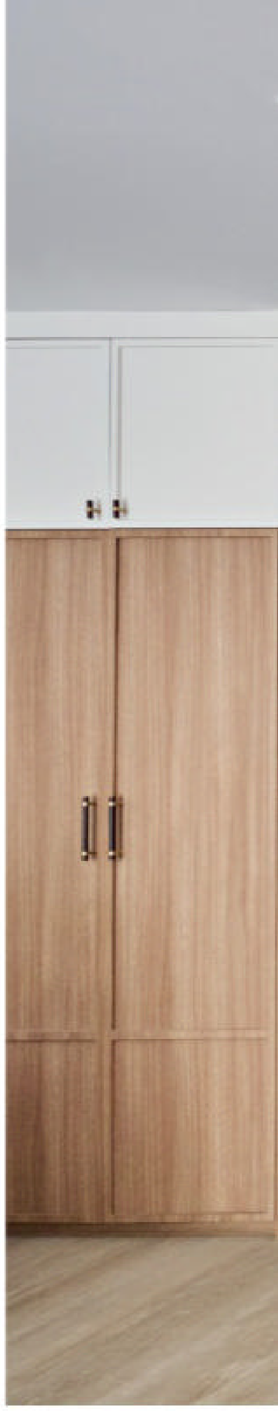
The hallway

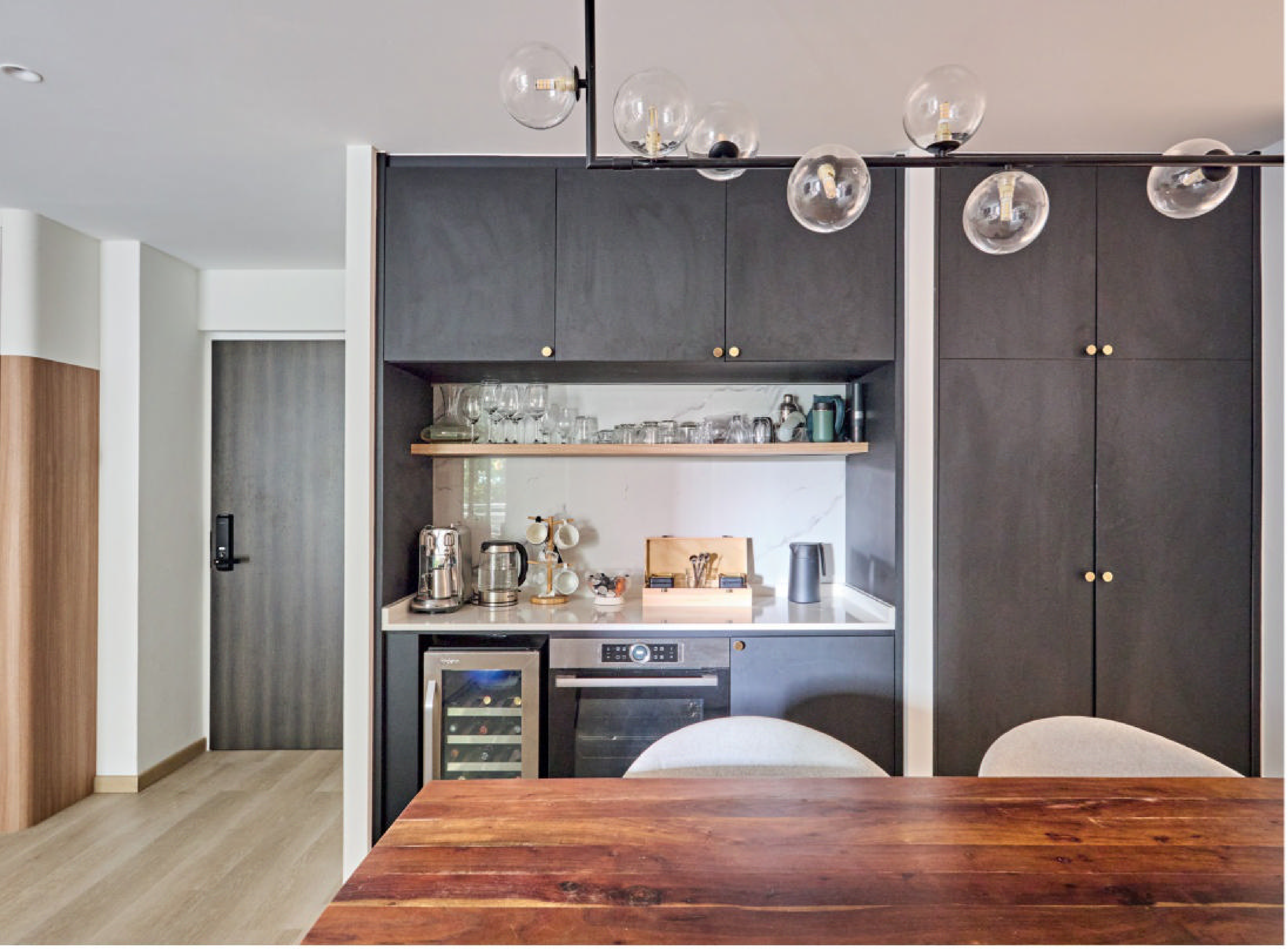
The unit has a typical layout, with a long hallway leading to the bedrooms and looking into the master bedroom. Intending to convert one bedroom into a study and combine the master bedroom with the adjacent bedroom, they moved the bedroom entrance to the side, enhancing the unit's architectural lines. ■

HAVING IT ALL

Many programmatic functions competing for valuable real estate within the home can pose quite a challenge. LYNN TAN finds out how the interior designer managed to pull it off.

LEFT
The dining table was brought over from the couple's previous home. It holds great sentimental value as it was where they signed their marriage papers over a cosy home solemnisation ceremony during the pandemic.





LEFT The household shelter door is concealed and designed as part of the dry kitchen cum bar.

BOTTOM The tranquil vibe of the balcony makes it the perfect space for the couple to enjoy their morning coffee or hang out with their toddler and dog.

OPPOSITE The couple decided not to have a coffee table in the living area because they had no need for one. This freed up more room for their daughter to play, made space for a larger sofa and would also avoid the habit of eating in front of the television.

When 32-year-old doctor, Akshay and his wife, Louise, a 30-year-old lawyer, purchased this flat, it was somewhat enclosed, dark and suffocating despite being well-maintained. This was something that they asked Justin Loh, senior designer at The Interior Lab to address in the renovation. One of the biggest challenges, however, was that the couple had a lot of programmatic functions that they wanted in the flat. In addition to the usual bedroom for themselves and a nursery for their 13-month-old daughter, the couple also needed a guest room for Akshay's parents, a helper's room, a study, and a walk-in wardrobe within the master bedroom. Akshay enjoys cooking, while Louise loves to bake, so their brief also included a spacious kitchen.

Incorporating such an extensive list of requirements into the home was no mean feat, but Justin took it all in his stride, starting with a review of the existing floor plan to identify how it could be reconfigured to accommodate all these functions.

With just one kitchen, things can potentially get a little chaotic when Akshay, Louise and their helper are cooking and baking simultaneously. Justin proposed the addition of a dry kitchen along the store room wall facing the dining area. An oven has been integrated under the counter top and this is where Louise does her baking preparation. If she requires more space, all she needs to do is turn around and use the

▶

WHO LIVES HERE

A couple in their 30s, their toddler and Maltipoo

HOME A five-room HDB at Kim Tian Place

SIZE 1,200 sq ft (approximate)

www.theinteriorlab.com.sg

THE THREE BEDROOMS WERE RECONFIGURED IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE FAMILY'S NEEDS.

generously-sized dining table as a sort of kitchen island. Designed with a bar concept, the dry kitchen also has a wine fridge beside the oven, space on the counter for a coffee machine and other appliances, as well as shelves for storing wine glasses. "When we host friends, this versatile dry kitchen cum bar is not only perfect for serving drinks, but it is also a great place to lay out the food," Akshay points out.

It was important to the couple that a proper bedroom be provided for their helper, so Justin made provisions for this by carving out some space from the existing kitchen. They invested in a Murphy bed with a built-in desk that hinges out when the bed is retracted and folds under the bed when the latter is deployed. "Before the renovation, laundry was hung out to dry through a window at one end of the kitchen. As the window is now part of the helper's room, I had to ensure that the room layout does not impede access to the window," says Justin.

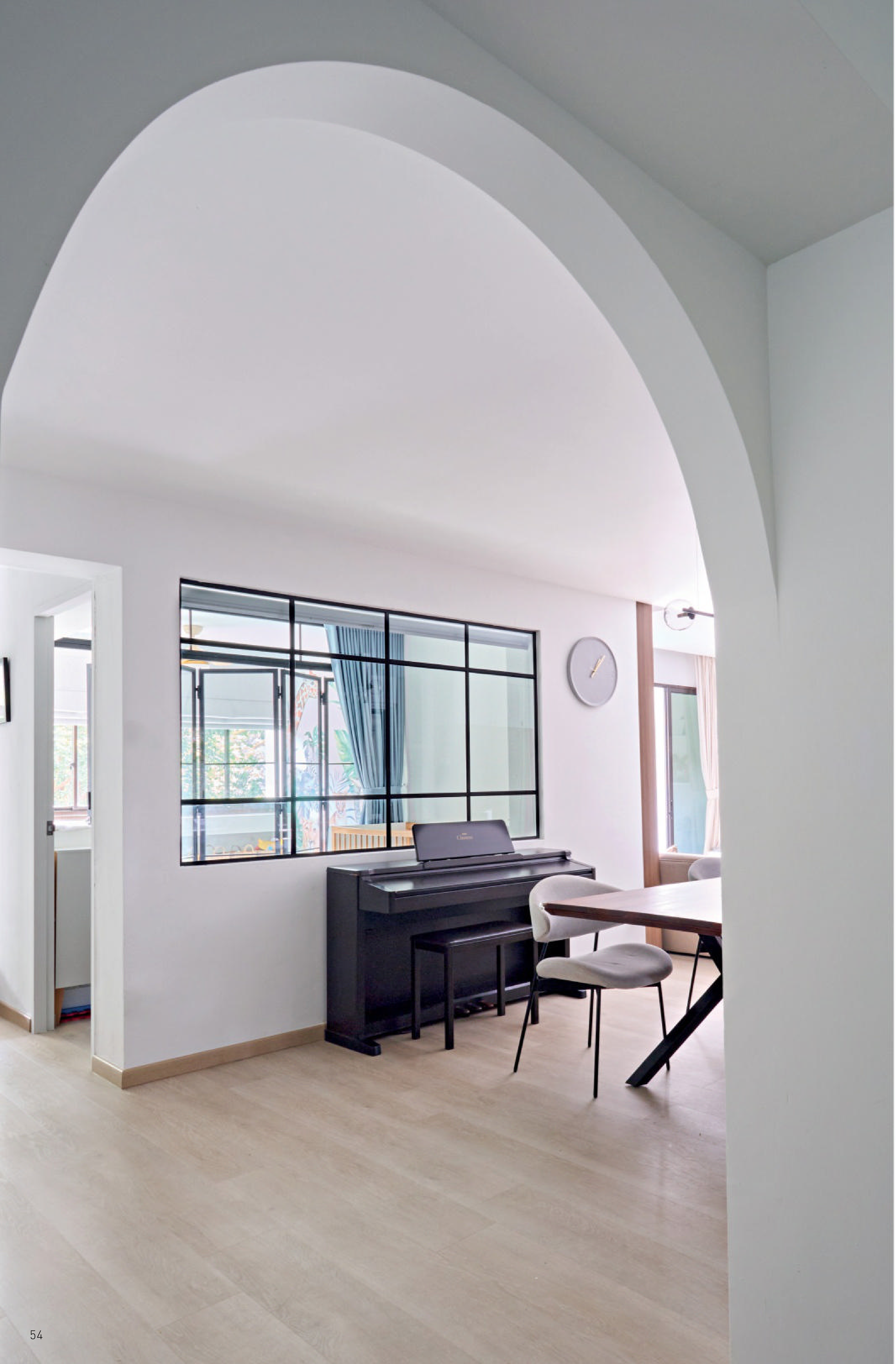
The three bedrooms were reconfigured in order to accommodate the family's needs. The bedroom beside the living and dining areas can now function independently as two rooms by introducing a sliding-folding glass partition within the room and adding an extra ▶

LEFT
A grey headboard design with a ledge on top provides just the place for the couple to display some of their treasured photographs and mementos in the master bedroom.

RIGHT
Arches can be found all around the house as it is something that Louise likes.

RIGHT BOTTOM
An animal-themed wallpaper injects some fun and vibrancy into the nursery.

OI CAT!



TOP
Based on the family's needs, Justin proposed open shelves on top instead of the usual closed cabinets in the wet kitchen.

LEFT
The use of glass for the partition in-between the two bedrooms, together with a glass opening on the wall between the bedroom and dining room, allows natural light all the way into the dining room.

door along the corridor. This flexibility comes in handy when Akshay's parents visit from India and may stay with the couple for up to a few months at a time. The use of glass for the partition, along with a glass opening on the wall between the bedroom and dining room, allows natural light from the window at one end to penetrate all the way through to the heart of the dining room.

By repositioning existing walls and doors of the master bedroom and the adjacent bedroom, Justin managed to make space for a study and walk-in wardrobe. The new study is about half the size of the original bedroom, which is sufficient for the couple, and the space that is freed up is now part of the master suite that comprises a new walk-in wardrobe. As a doctor, Akshay sometimes needs to get to work very early. The walk-in wardrobe was configured such that he can wash up and get changed without waking Louise, who is a light sleeper.

The family moved into their new home in February 2022, shortly after their baby was born. The living and dining areas are where they find themselves spending most of their time when they are at home. "It is where we can relax, play with our daughter or lounge and watch television," shares Louise. The balcony beside the living room is an especially idyllic spot with a view of the surrounding greenery. The monochromatic palette and black-and-white floor tiles balance the modern contemporary theme of the home. Akshay comments: "The balcony is very breezy and peaceful. We don't hear the sound of cars, just the wind and birds chirping, and occasionally voices of kids playing downstairs."

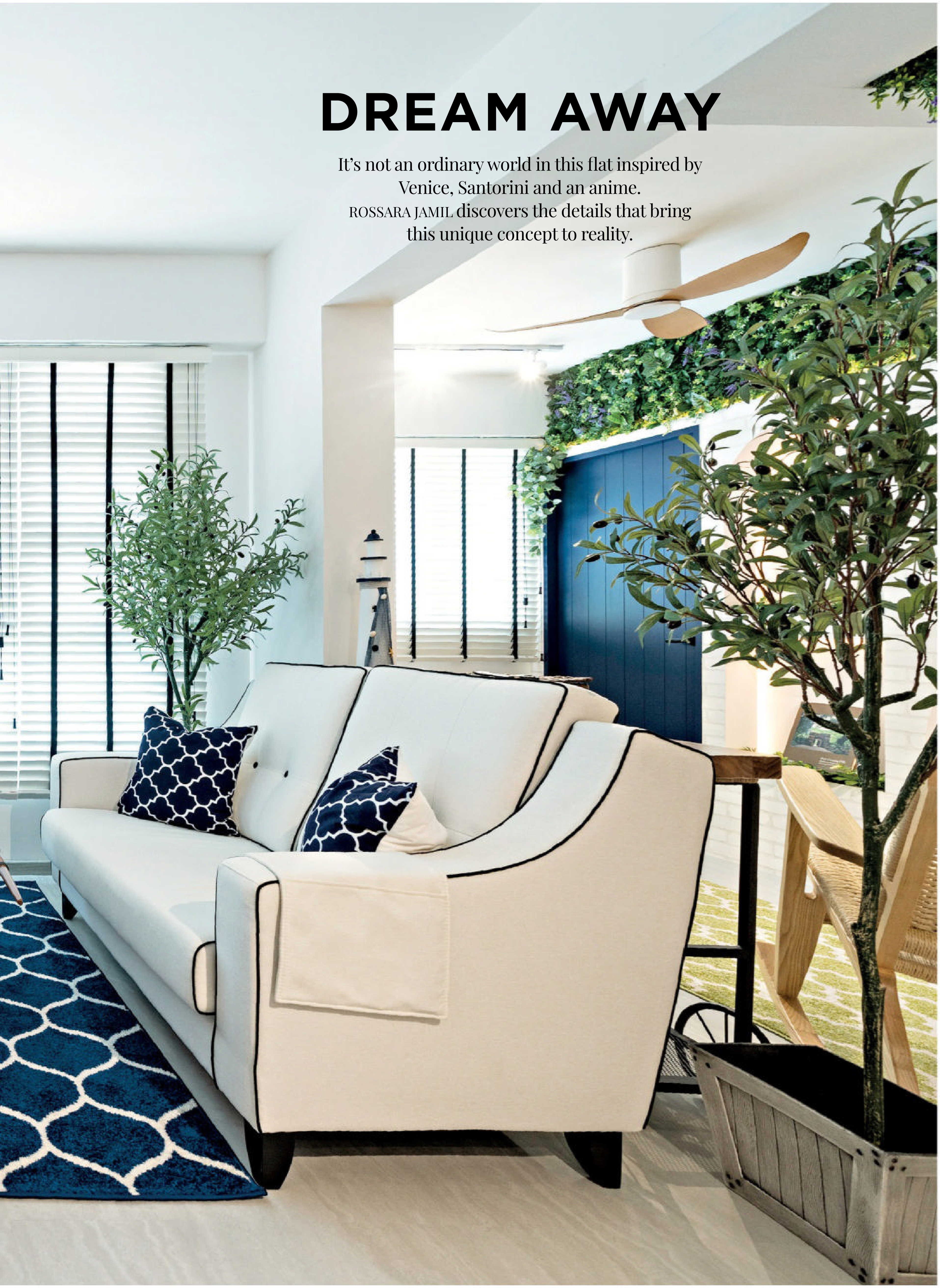
The three-month renovation cost $103,000 excluding furniture and furnishings. The client's long wish list may have seemed like a tall order for Justin, but he managed to create a home that not only meets their needs, but also addresses their emotional well-being with its serenity and relaxed vibes. ■

photos LAWRENCE TEO art direction KRISTY QUAH

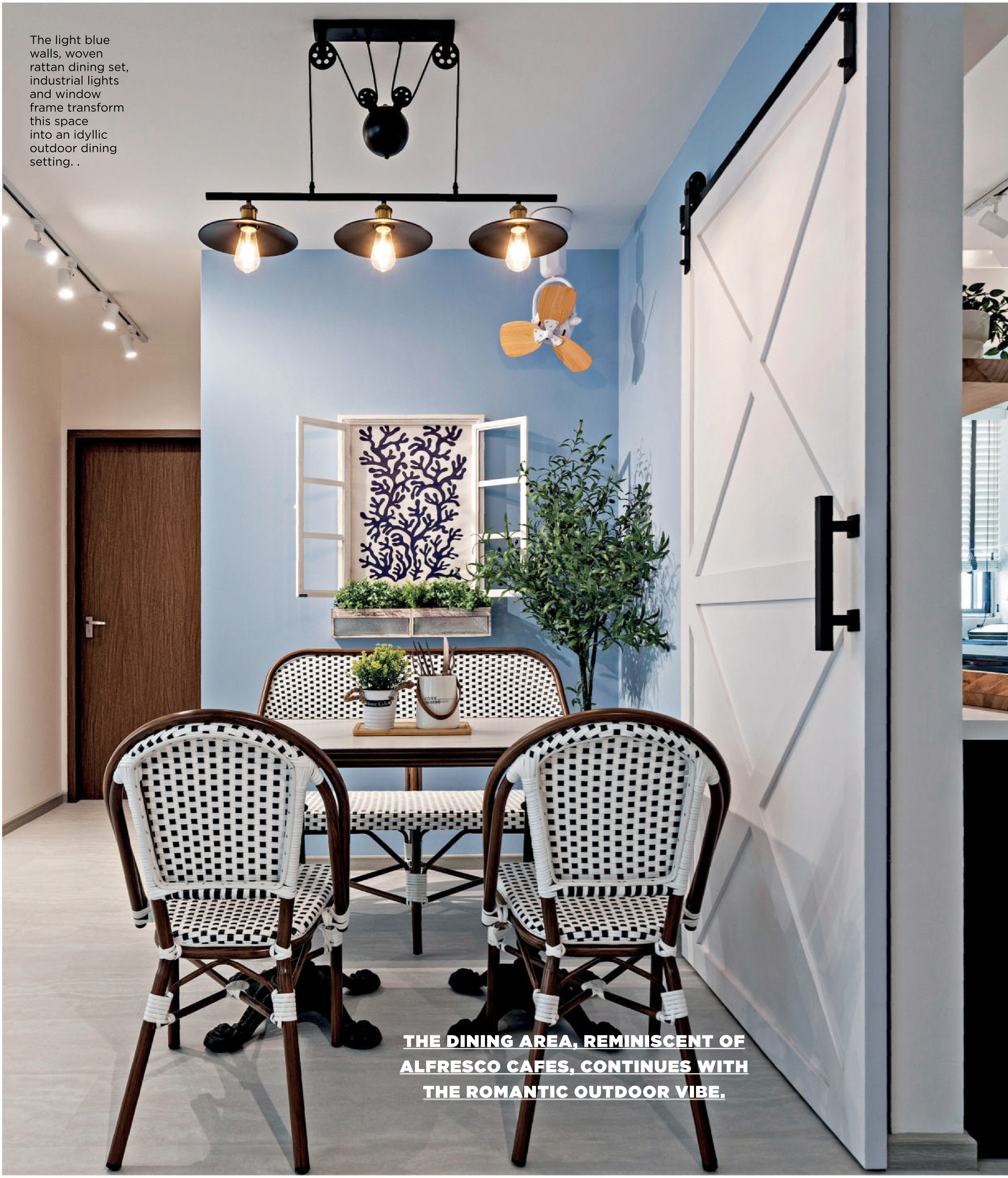
CASA

DREAM AWAY

It's not an ordinary world in this flat inspired by Venice, Santorini and an anime. ROSSARA JAMIL discovers the details that bring this unique concept to reality.

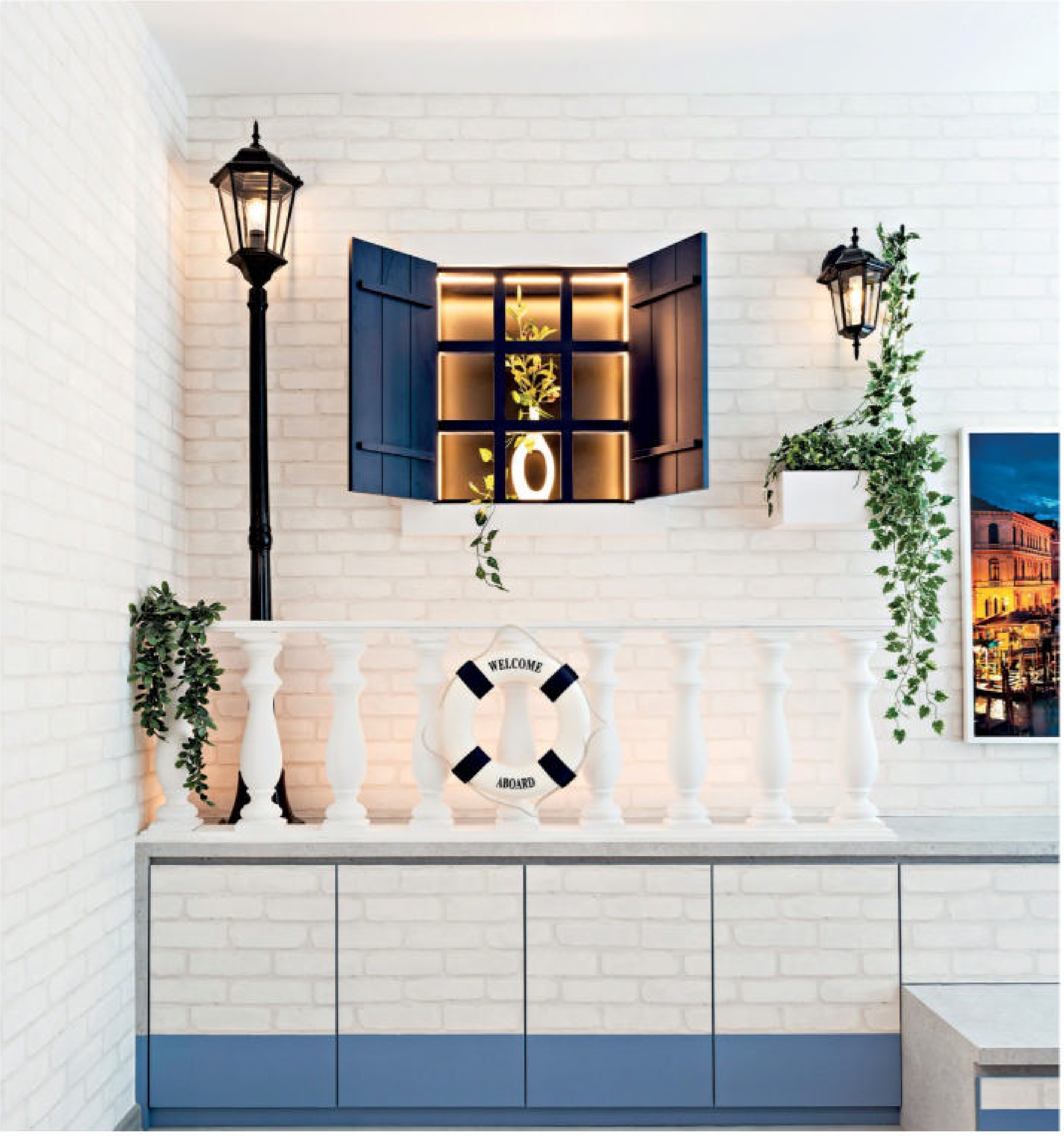


LEFT
Blue, white, and bright, this four-room BTO flat houses a unique blend of Venice and Santorini design elements.



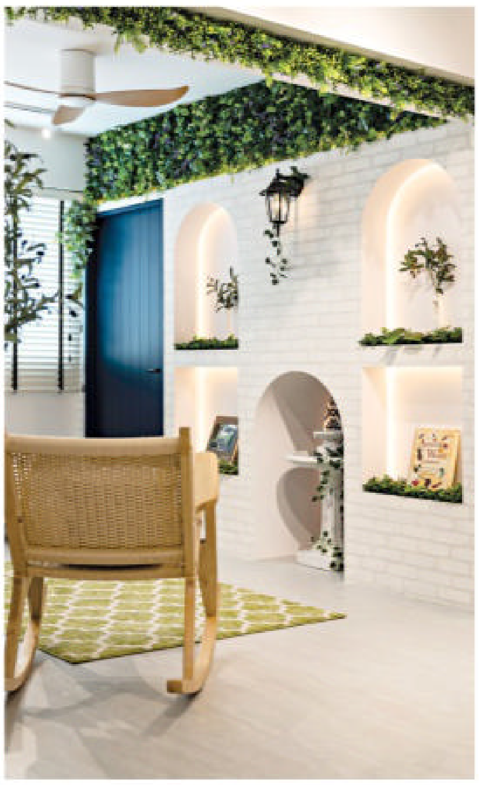
The light blue walls, woven rattan dining set, industrial lights and window frame transform this space into an idyllic outdoor dining setting. .

THE DINING AREA, REMINISCENT OF ALFRESCO CAFES, CONTINUES WITH THE ROMANTIC OUTDOOR VIBE.



LEFT
The living area features a canal-like setting with the television feature wall mimicking the banks of a canal, complete with decorative rails, windows, and a streetlamp, as well as carpentry with a blue strip to symbolise the waterline.

BELOW
Removing one bedroom's walls makes possible a chillout area that is connected to the living area. This space is decorated to resemble a venetian courtyard.



Occasionally, interior designers encounter design briefs that are out of the norm. While interior designer Carmen Tang is no stranger to challenging briefs, the one given by the owners of this four-room HDB flat was what she would describe as "unimaginably tough". The homeowners had initially approached her for a Scandinavian-style home. However, the anime Aria captured their hearts, and they changed their brief to a romantic Venice-inspired space decked out in the colours of Santorini.

Given this unique brief, the design director of Wolf Woof took this as a challenge to push the design limits of the typical HDB BTO homes. She aimed to create a one-of-a-kind home with the concept she imagined for this flat in Geylang. She says, "I aimed to approach the design from a unique angle so that there is a story behind it, rather than just painting a few walls blue and throwing some blue cushions around for cosiness."

Carmen pushed herself to develop a living room concept that revolves around Venice's canals, but one that would assimilate the television feature wall and incorporate storage. She proposed the idea of a 'boardwalk' along the canal bank for the television feature wall and stepped storage units.

She also placed a boat-shaped coffee table on a blue patterned rug to signify the waterway. On the other side ▶

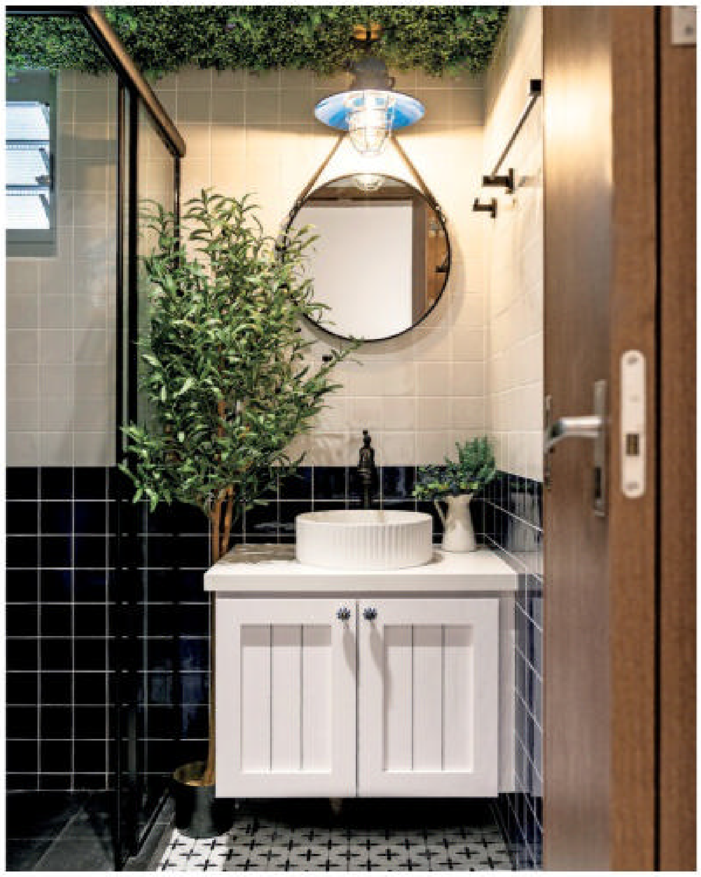
WHO LIVES HERE

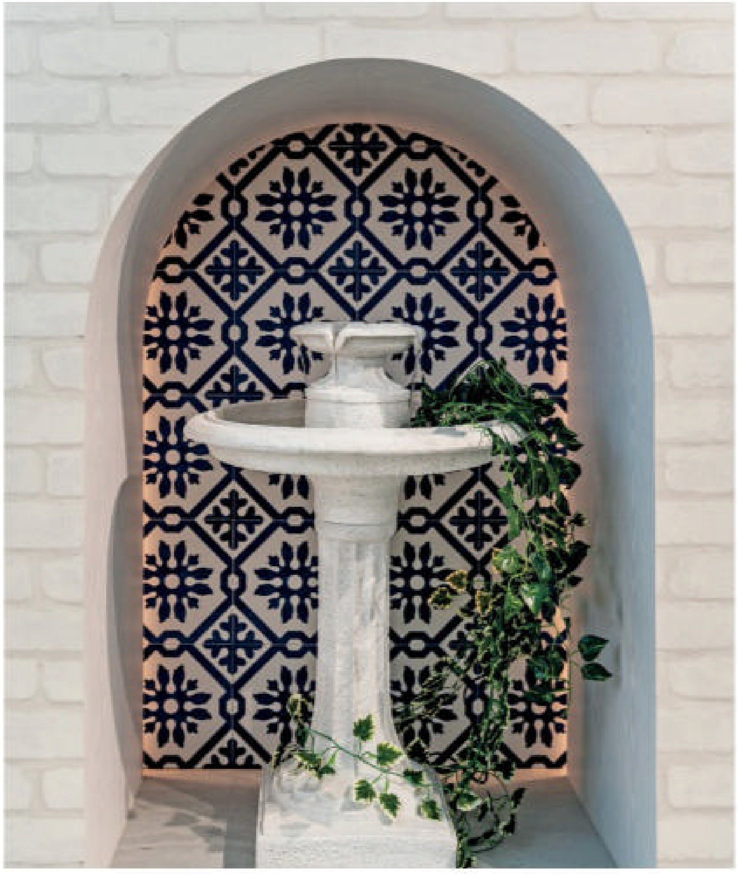
A couple in their 40s
HOME A four-room HDB BTO flat in Geylang
SIZE 2,960 sq ft
ID Wolf Woof
www.wolfwoof.com.sg

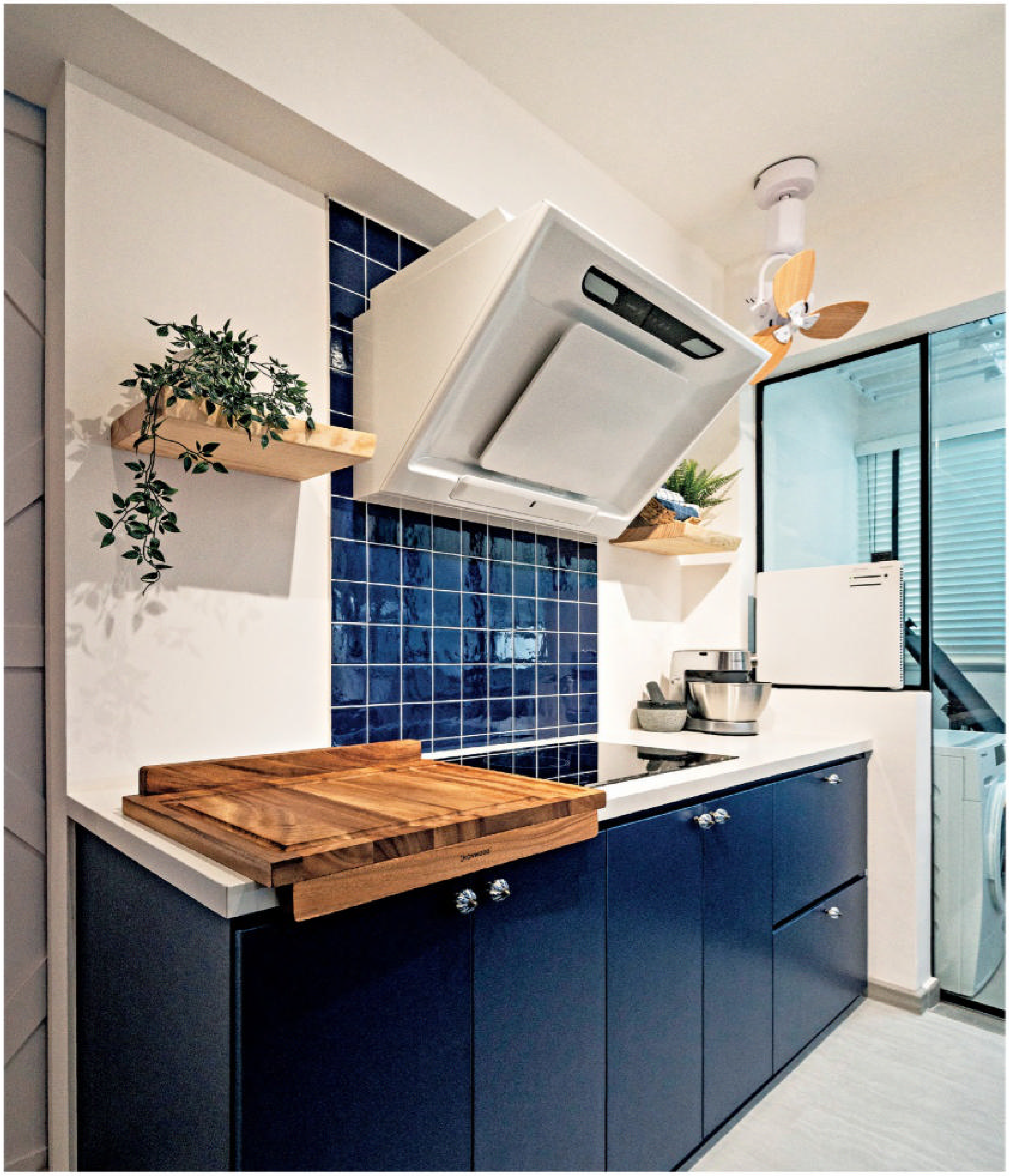
ABOVE LEFT
The bathroom features a vanity cabinet in shiplap style. Patterned flooring complements the square blue and off-white wall tiles.

ABOVE TOP
A water fountain for feng shui was an element broached midway, so Carmen revised the courtyard design to make the water fountain the star of the space.

BELOW
Clean lines in the kitchen make the space feel more spacious.







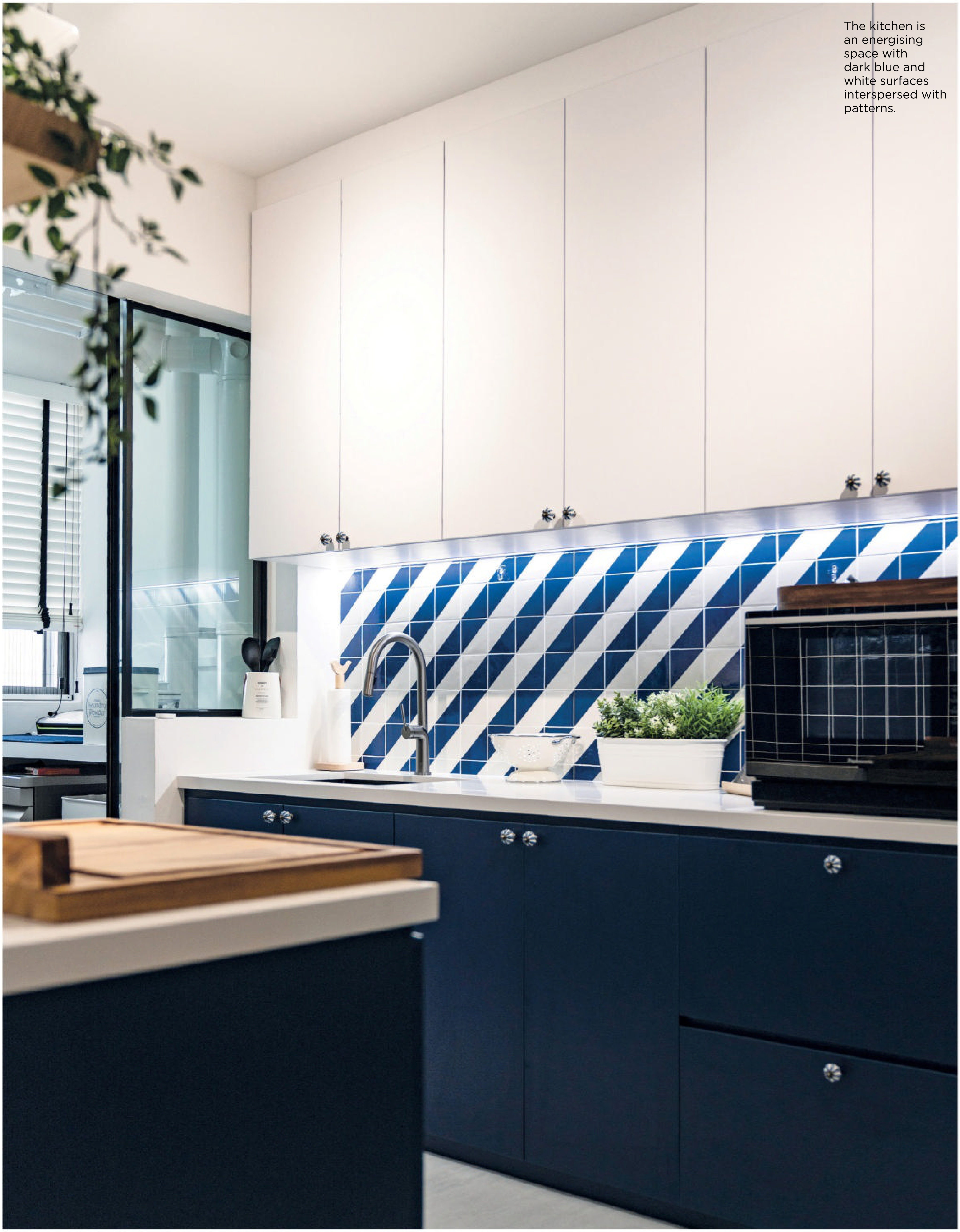
of it, behind the sofa, is a seating area she nicknamed the courtyard. She explains, "The opposite 'bank' would be the courtyard of another 'home'. It's a far-fetched concept, but the anime-inspired brief was far-fetched to begin with. To me, it was clearly a case of 'go big or go home'."

The couple, a data engineer and an auditor, were inspired by the anime Aria, a charming slice-of-life series set in an alternate-world Venice with calming water scenes and an optimistic worldview. They had pictured their new home as a restful space where they could enjoy their interests in books, computer games, anime, and cooking. Ultimately, the home must evoke a peaceful, laidback ambience that feels like it is outside Singapore.

The biggest challenge Carmen faced was in executing the details. The aim was to have brick walls for the television and courtyard areas. As a detail-oriented designer, she wanted the bricks to extend to the window. However, stone veneers would be too heavy for carpentry. She proposed brick-patterned wallpaper instead as a practical way to produce the look. Light blue laminates at the base of the storage solutions subtly denote the water line.

Carmen also incorporated a European-style water fountain in the courtyard area to fulfil the couple's feng shui requirements, placing it as a "celebrated feature" in the

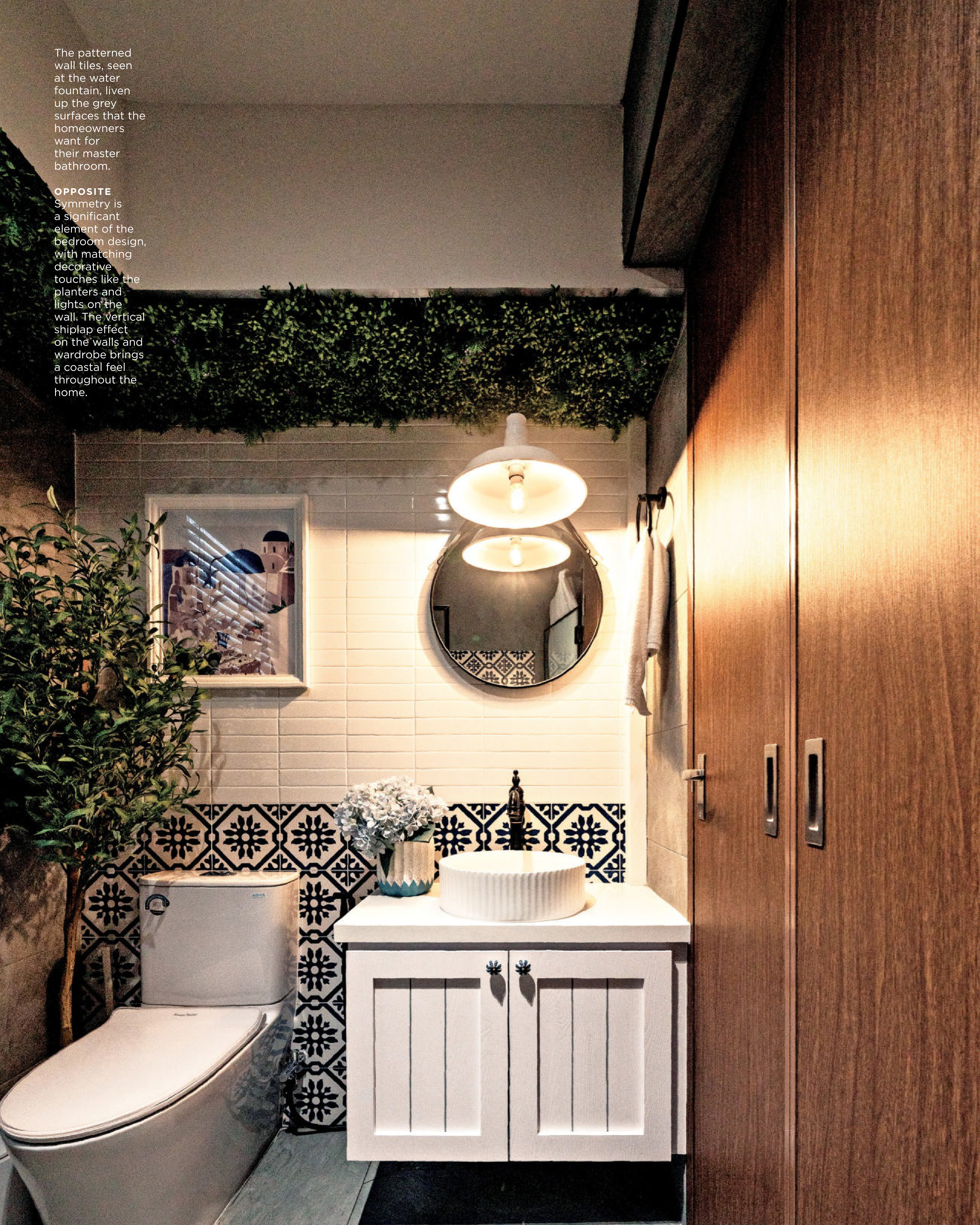
▶



The kitchen is an energising space with dark blue and white surfaces interspersed with patterns.

The patterned wall tiles, seen at the water fountain, liven up the grey surfaces that the homeowners want for their master bathroom.

OPPOSITE Symmetry is a significant element of the bedroom design, with matching decorative touches like the planters and lights on the wall. The vertical shiplap effect on the walls and wardrobe brings a coastal feel throughout the home.



centre of the wall with display niches. This space, formerly a bedroom, has become a comfortable space for chilling out. The other room, now a study, can be accessed via a blue door in the courtyard, as if entering a hidden home on a leafy European street.

The dining area, reminiscent of alfresco cafes, continues with the romantic outdoor vibe. A white barn door leads to the kitchen, all decked out in blue and white too, with Mediterranean-style handles.

Carmen was meticulous in sourcing items that fit the space to solidify the theme. “The most important piece of furniture has to be the ‘boat’, which I wanted to pass off as a gondola for the concept to work. So, I dug deep to find the boat-shaped coffee table that I came across on some online platform some time back,” Carmen shares. “I was over the moon when I managed to secure it.”

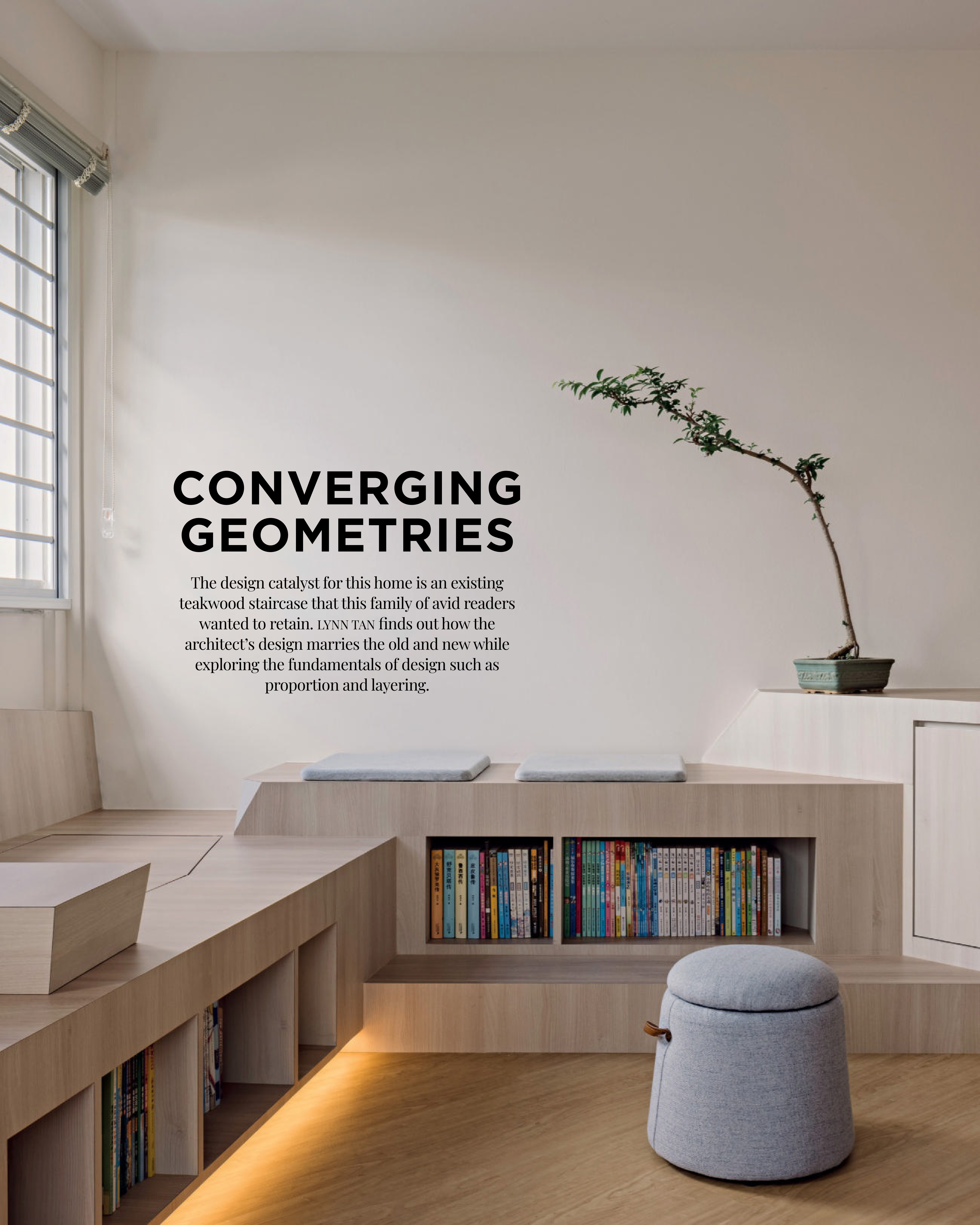
She incorporated outdoor and industrial-style lights, including a streetlamp, to anchor the concept. Carmen improvised the window poster frame from a traditional wall decor. The homeowners were also invested in the design process, sourcing knick-knacks to decorate their home.

Nautical elements were introduced in the bathrooms and master bedroom. The shiplap effect for the customised carpentry and wall features creates a sense of consistency. Different hues of blue throughout the home, from the accessories and art pieces to blue patterned tiles, bring the Santorini feel into the home.

Having settled in after their move in November 2022, the homeowners have found what they like most about their home. The husband appreciates how functional the space is. As for the wife, the chillout area has become a space for respite, where she can enjoy the sound of the running fountain water while relaxing on the rocking chair. ■

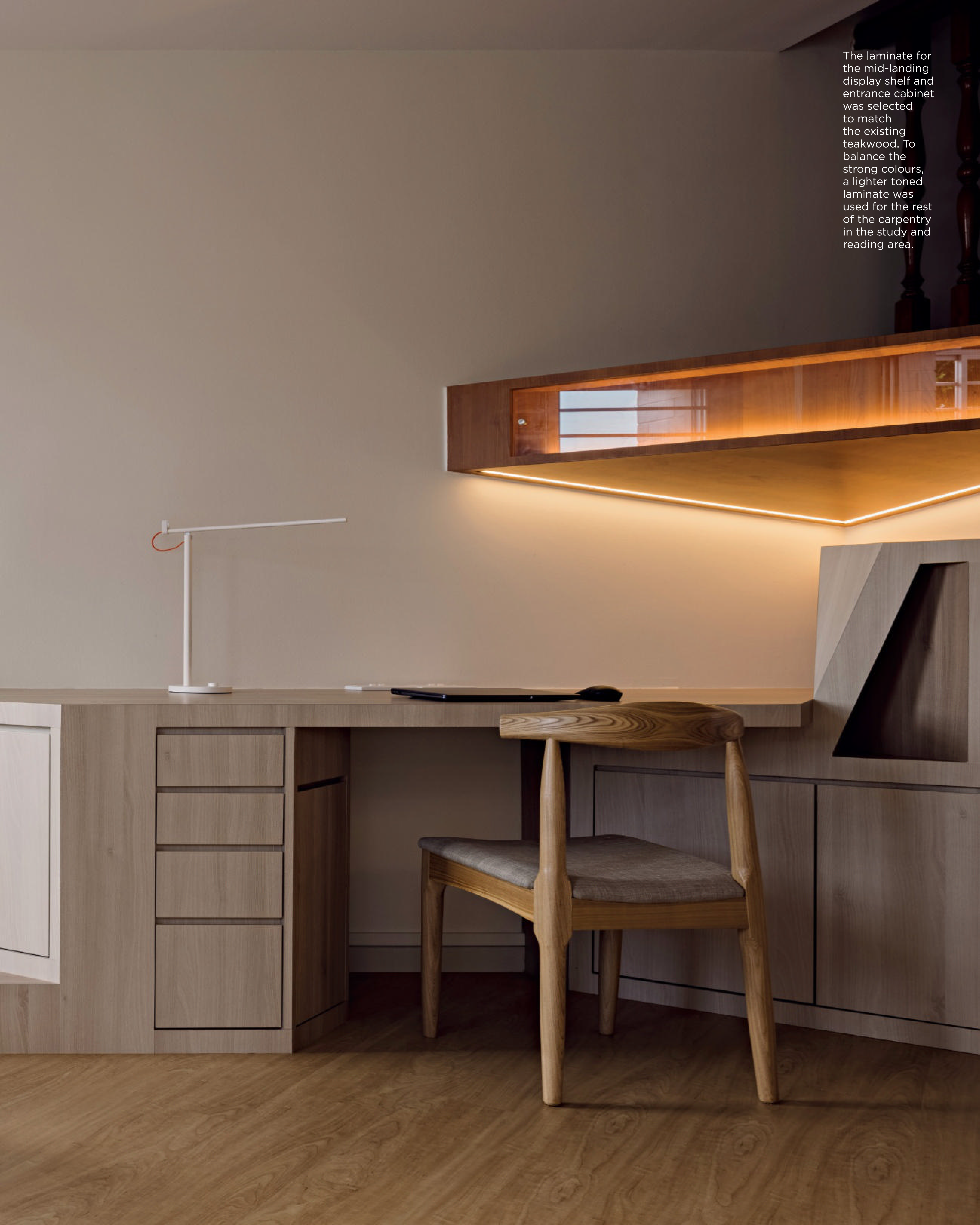
AMORE
LOVE
LOVE

photos WOLF WOOF

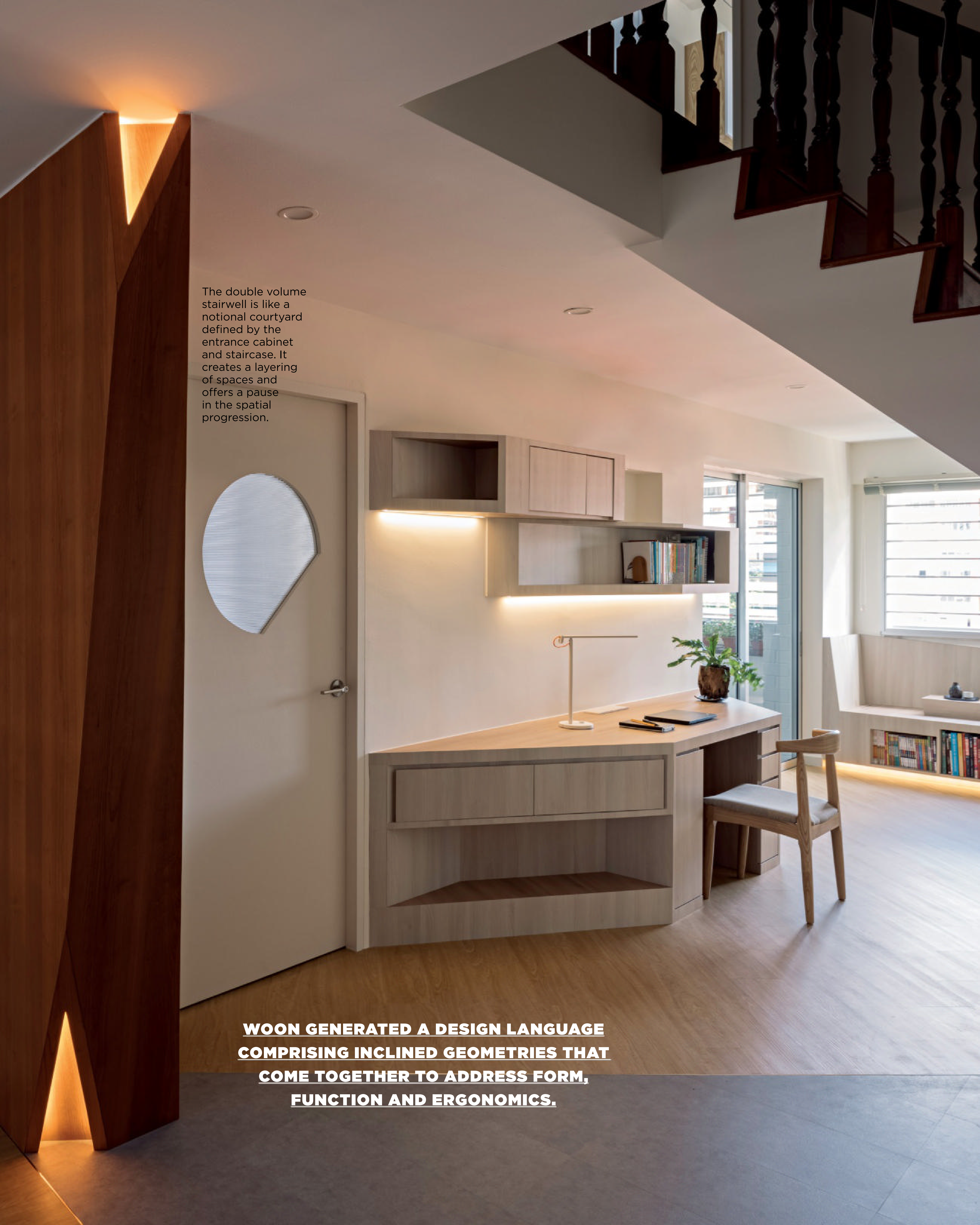


CONVERGING GEOMETRIES

The design catalyst for this home is an existing teakwood staircase that this family of avid readers wanted to retain. LYNN TAN finds out how the architect's design marries the old and new while exploring the fundamentals of design such as proportion and layering.



The laminate for the mid-landing display shelf and entrance cabinet was selected to match the existing teakwood. To balance the strong colours, a lighter toned laminate was used for the rest of the carpentry in the study and reading area.



The double volume stairwell is like a notional courtyard defined by the entrance cabinet and staircase. It creates a layering of spaces and offers a pause in the spatial progression.

WOON GENERATED A DESIGN LANGUAGE COMPRISING INCLINED GEOMETRIES THAT COME TOGETHER TO ADDRESS FORM, FUNCTION AND ERGONOMICS.

As a family who loves to read and with two sons who are in primary and secondary school, the clients' brief to architect, Woon Chung Yen, founder and principal of Metre Architects, was to have the living room designed as a study cum reading area. The husband, who works in IT, and the wife, who is a teacher, also wanted to retain the existing staircase in the maisonette as the teakwood is of very high quality and is in excellent condition despite the unit being about thirty years old.

This was Woon's cue to adopt a conservational approach to the project and come up with an interior design that would harmoniously integrate this 'vintage' element with the new. "The functional requirements were not difficult to fulfil. It is the design aesthetics that were harder to convey," Woon admits. He shared that the homeowners did not want cabinetry works that are rigid and utilitarian and they showed him images of what they liked. He interpreted their requirements, made astute inferences and concluded that what they wanted was something with a sense of rhythm and which enhances the overall ambience of the space instead of simply providing storage.

Using the diagonal line of the existing staircase as a starting point, Woon generated a formal language comprising inclined geometries that come together to address form, function and ergonomics. The ▶

WHO LIVES HERE

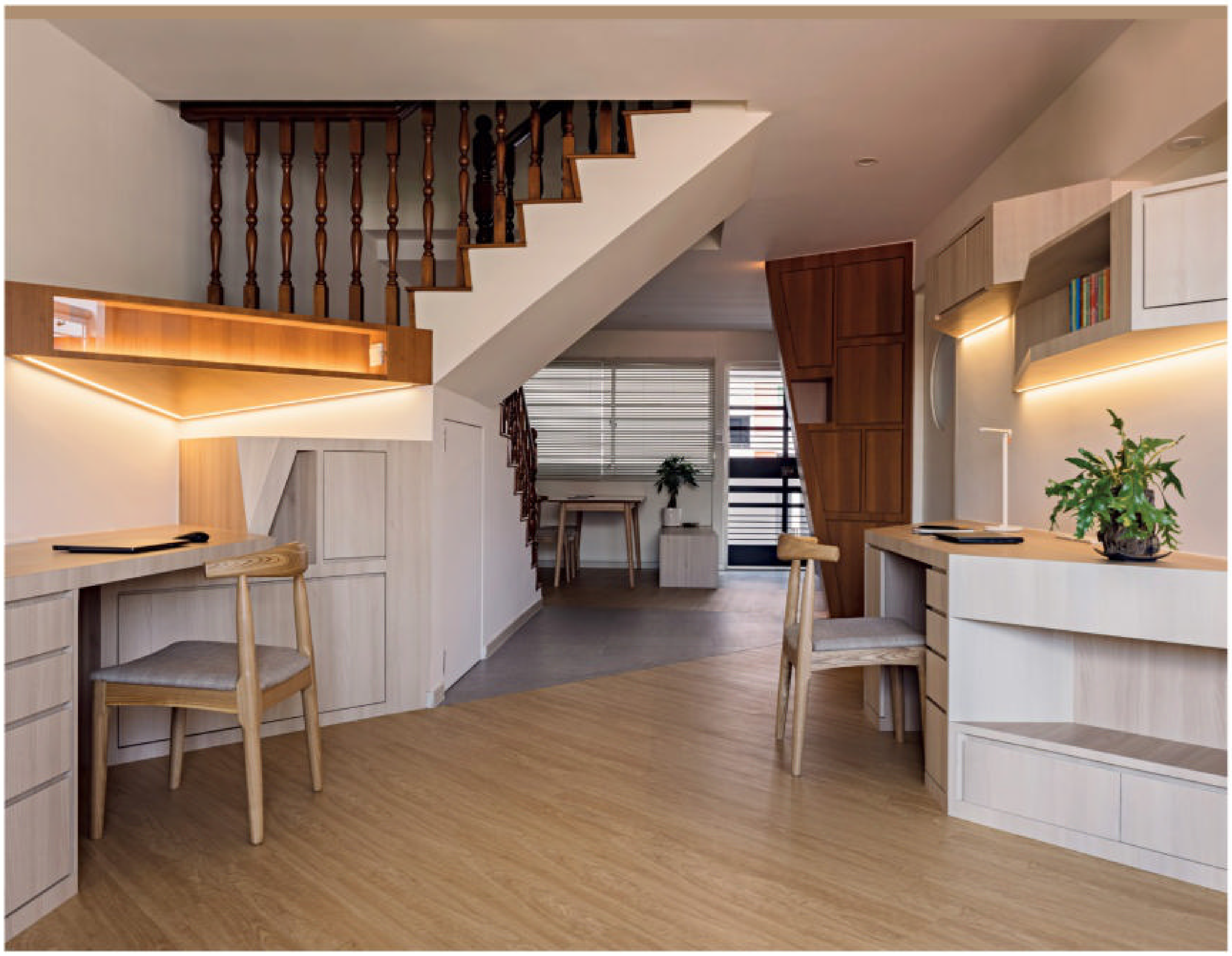
A couple in their 50s and their two sons

HOME A HDB maisonette in Hougang

SIZE 1,593 sq ft

ID Metre Architects

www.metre.sg



ABOVE
The customised dining bench serves three purposes- as seating, for shoe storage, as well as defining the entrance foyer threshold.

LEFT
An angled study table opposite the staircase acts as a funnel that draws you into the reading and study area.

first of a series of key elements is a floor-to-ceiling cabinet near the main entrance. Its unique slant, along with the staircase, creates a polygonal entrance portal that not only defines the threshold, but also serves as a privacy screen from the common corridor. This was something that was important to the homeowners as they were uncomfortable with the original layout, which is typical of most apartments in Singapore where the interior is in the direct line-of-sight from the main entrance.

The entrance cabinet is also a manifestation of Woon's exploration in articulating layered spaces within the flat. Its angled form strikes a dialogue with the staircase, which imbues the double-volume stairwell with the spatial quality of a triangulated courtyard. This notional courtyard delineates the dining area upfront, beside the main entrance, from the study and reading area beyond.

As the pivotal element within the whole design, the staircase itself was given a lot of design attention. Woon introduced a triangular display shelf at the mid-landing that extends beyond the balustrades. "Symbolically, this represents a new growth sprouting from an old teak tree," he points out. Functionally, the cabinet also houses recessed lighting and the home's WI-FI router.

The triangulated shelf projects beyond the staircase mid-landing, cascades down to the study desk below and turns the corner into a reading bench with shelves below. The

LEFT
A fluted glass panel allows light from the kitchen into the living space. Its unconventional geometry was inspired by a Chinese poem about the moon rising over the mountain.

BELOW
The geometry and size of the entrance cabinet posed challenges in terms of fabrication, transport and installation.

BOTTOM
The bedrooms on the second storey have been kept as free and open as possible and the design of the bed, desk and shelves complements the built-ins in the study and reading area downstairs.

whole transition is negotiated through a series of tiers and levels, angles and chamfers that ties in with the vocabulary of the rest of the home.

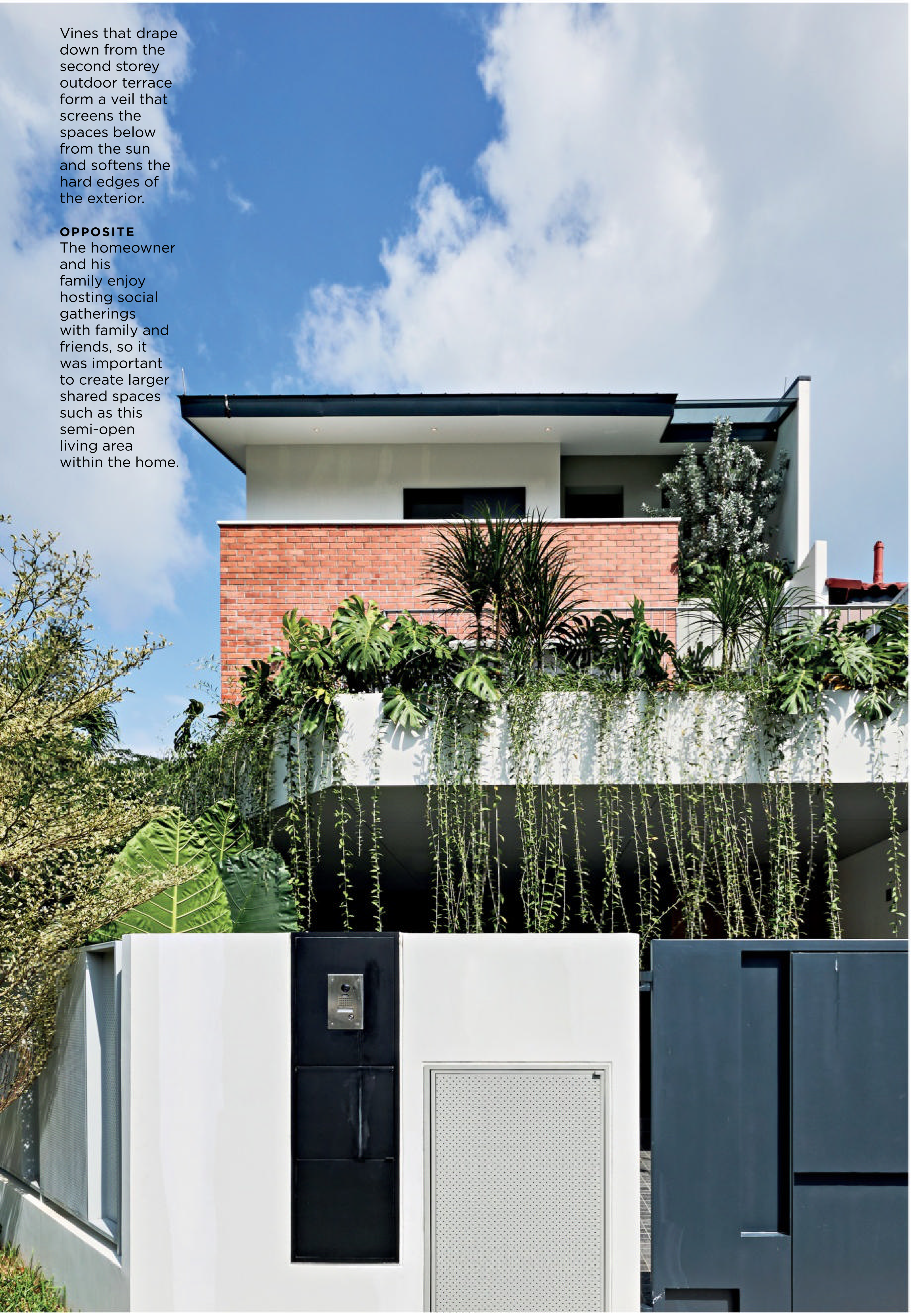
The design and construction took about five months and the family moved into their new home in September 2021. The renovations cost about $70,000, excluding furniture and furnishings, and priority was given to the living room study and reading areas. The existing layout was retained and no hacking of walls was necessary as the rectilinear floor plan provided a suitable blank canvas. However, the flooring, light fixtures, air-conditioning units and sanitary fittings were replaced.

The renovation also involved extensive built-in carpentry works. "The existing cabinetry felt rigid, utilitarian and were rather piecemeal in terms of not having a coherent design language and strategy," Woon comments. He considers having the design done to both the clients' and his satisfaction only half the battle won. Another crucial step is finding the right contractor and carpenter who are able to realise the design. And he found just the man for the job- master carpenter, Ng Soo Hock from Kia Hock Furniture and Renovation. Although he is getting on in years, he is always up for a challenge and derives great satisfaction in successfully executing Woon's unique designs, even if the unusual geometries are more challenging to fabricate and take more effort and time.

To Woon, "musical notes are to music what forms are to architecture". As an architect, he believes that interior design is also about form-making and the carpentry determines the form in the context of an interior. "Carpentry works fulfil both functional requirements, as well as aesthetic aspirations through the moulding of space," he explains. This was exactly what he set out to achieve in this home and it definitely seems like he has accomplished it. Unlike in their previous home where everyone would be holed up in their own bedrooms, the homeowners shared that since moving into their new home, they have been spending more time together within the same space. ■

The above- and under-counter cabinets have been replaced in a colour and material palette that is more in keeping with the rest of the home.

photos STUDIO PERIPHERY



Vines that drape down from the second storey outdoor terrace form a veil that screens the spaces below from the sun and softens the hard edges of the exterior.

OPPOSITE The homeowner and his family enjoy hosting social gatherings with family and friends, so it was important to create larger shared spaces such as this semi-open living area within the home.

A HOUSE OF MANY FACES

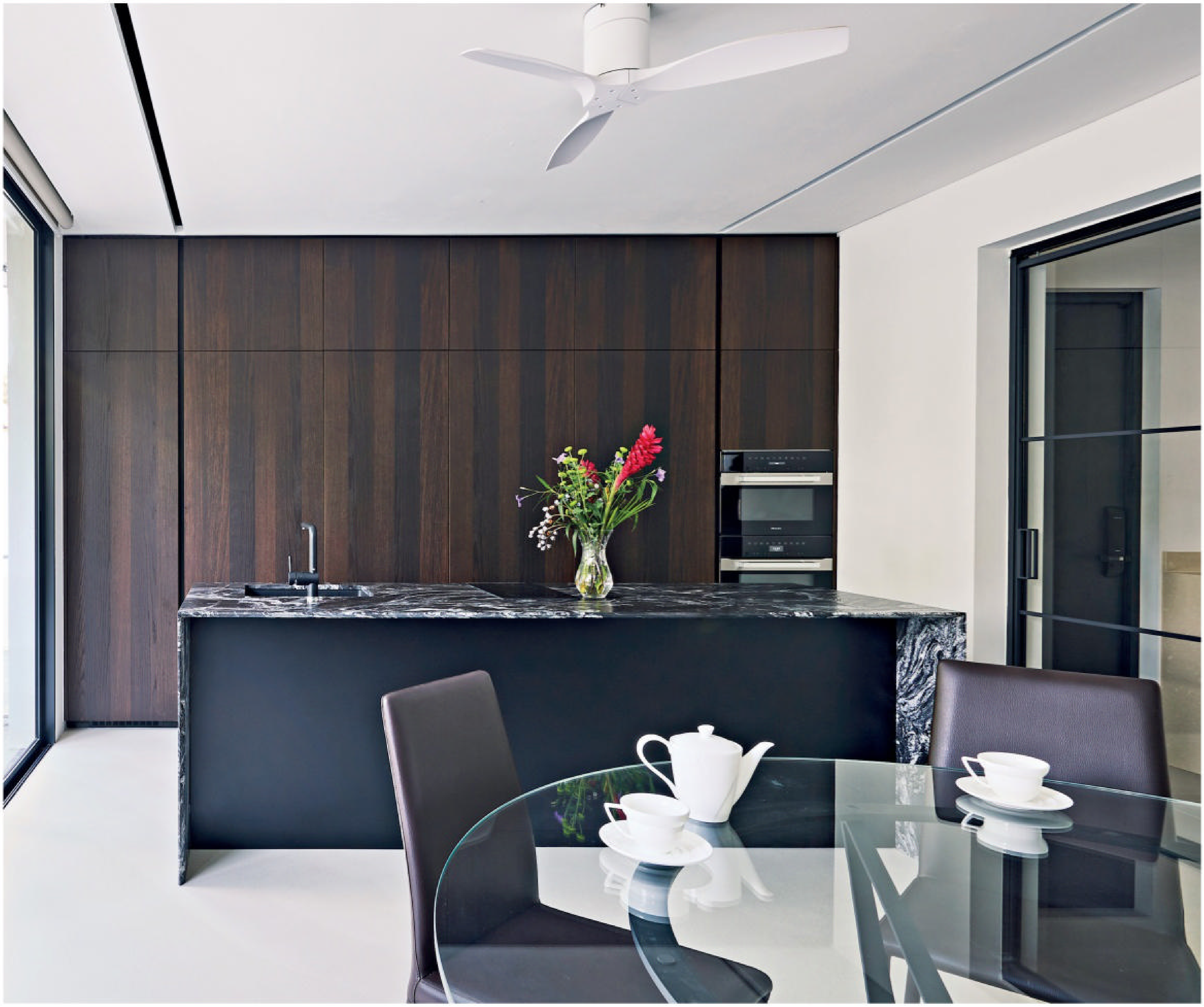
This home is a result of the architect questioning the "What Ifs" and "Why Nots" in order to push the boundaries of design to realise new possibilities. LYNN TAN goes on an exploratory visit.

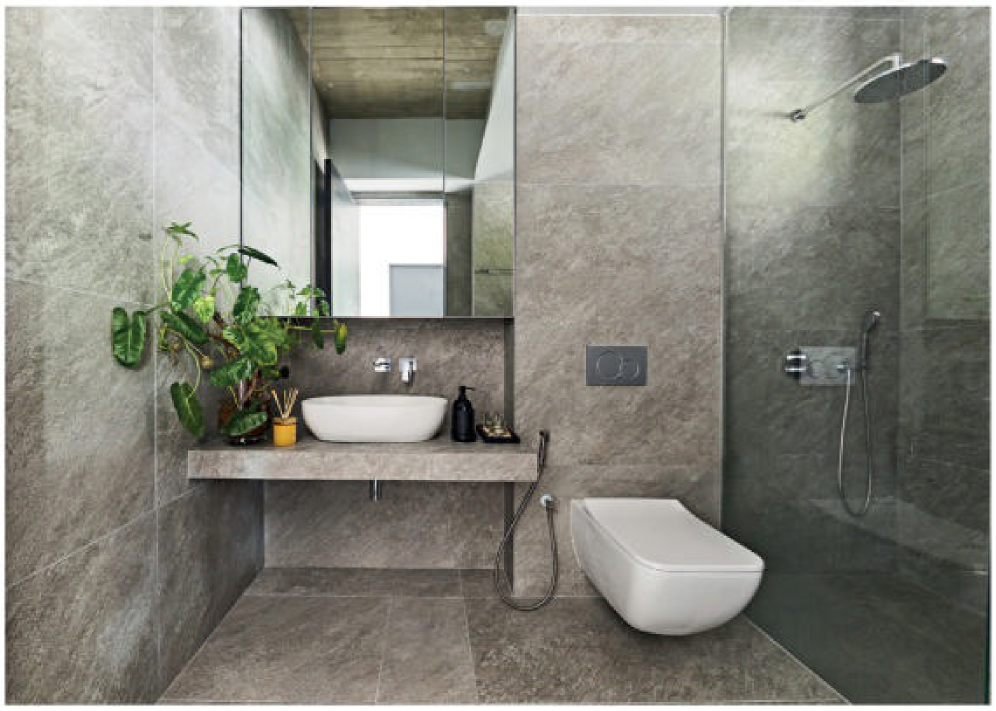
Having lived in this corner terraced home with his family for about three decades, David Tan, a pilot in his 60s, decided that it was timely to demolish and rebuild the property so that it can better cater to their needs. "We wanted a home that would allow us to have larger spaces for gatherings of friends and family, while at the same time preserve a sense of privacy, calm and quiet in the bedroom spaces. It was also important to us to mitigate the westerly sun and facilitate cross-ventilation in the home," says David, who moved back into the new home in December 2022 after a 15-month construction.

The project was entrusted to Fiona Tan, a registered architect and principal of Atelier IF. Having practiced with award-winning architectural firms, she founded Atelier IF in 2021 and takes delight in "questioning the familiar and negotiating the peculiar". Starting with an empathetic understanding of the client's brief and a sensitive appreciation of the site context, she set out to design a new home for David and his family in a place that they are familiar with, while addressing the unique peculiarities of site and brief.

More than just skin deep

As a corner terraced property, the home has multiple faces. Every opening, every material and every element offers a clue to the stories that are unfolding within and reflects the differentiated and distinct spatial experiences inside. "Where privacy and a sense of restfulness is desired, small customised openings are ▶





TOP
Bi-fold and sliding doors allow the dining room to be fully-opened or enclosed as an intimate gathering space when dinner parties are held.

LEFT
The first storey powder room also doubles up as a convenient place to give the family pet dog his bath as it is right next to his favourite sunken patio play area.

OPPOSITE TOP
The semi-open living area conveys a sense of the outdoors and offers the family and guests a comfortable and breezy space to unwind.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
The "black box" and sunken patio separate the semi-open living area in front from the dining area at the back.

Circular motifs inject an element of fun and playfulness.

OPPOSITE Pine wood formwork creates an interesting textured imprint on the off-form concrete ceiling.

WHO LIVES HERE

A couple in their 60s, their adult daughter and pet boxer

HOME A corner terraced home in Bukit Timah

SIZE 2,930 sq ft (land area)
4,500 sq ft (approximate Gross Floor Area)

ID Atelier IF

www.atelier-if.net

utilised to afford views of the outside but prevent views inward. In other areas, large sliding windows and doors are introduced to open up the interior spaces to the outdoors," Fiona explains.

The long façade on the side of the house is exposed to the afternoon sun at an angle. The rear corner that bears the brunt of the direct sun is a solid wall chamfered at 45 degrees. The master bedroom window at the rear of the second storey has opaque, black, metal sliding panels that shield the room from the afternoon sun and achieve a full blackout effect in lieu of interior curtains or blinds. The black, pop-out window frame not only serves a practical purpose of providing additional shading, but also creates a visual impact juxtaposed against the solid white wall.

The external envelope consists of not just hard elements, but also softscape in ▶

LEFT
The family area on the second story looks out onto an outdoor terrace above the car porch.

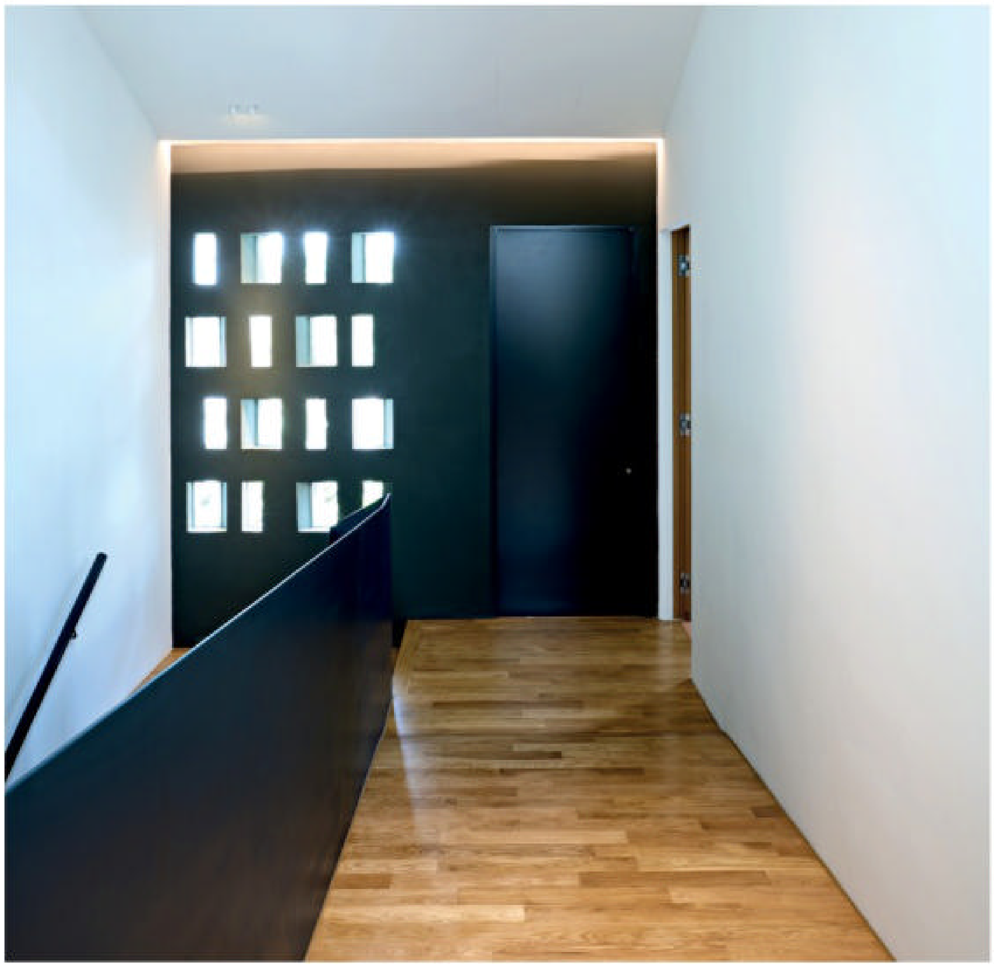
OPPOSITE TOP
The black steel stair core weaves its way up like a ribbon.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
Taking into account the daughter's need for greater privacy, a gentle ramp demarcates the space between the guest room in front and her room at the rear.

planter boxes on the facades and around the periphery of the outdoor terrace on the second storey. The vines that drape down from this outdoor terrace to the car porch and semi-open living room below form a veil that screens these spaces on the first storey from the sun and softens the hard edges of the exterior.

Embracing tropical living
For David and his family, it was important for the home to have "a sense of the outdoors". This has been addressed in the design, from the macro massing down to micro elements. The sectional massing was conceived with cross-ventilation in mind. The spaces on the first storey have been designed with a fluidity that allows them to open and flow seamlessly into one another.

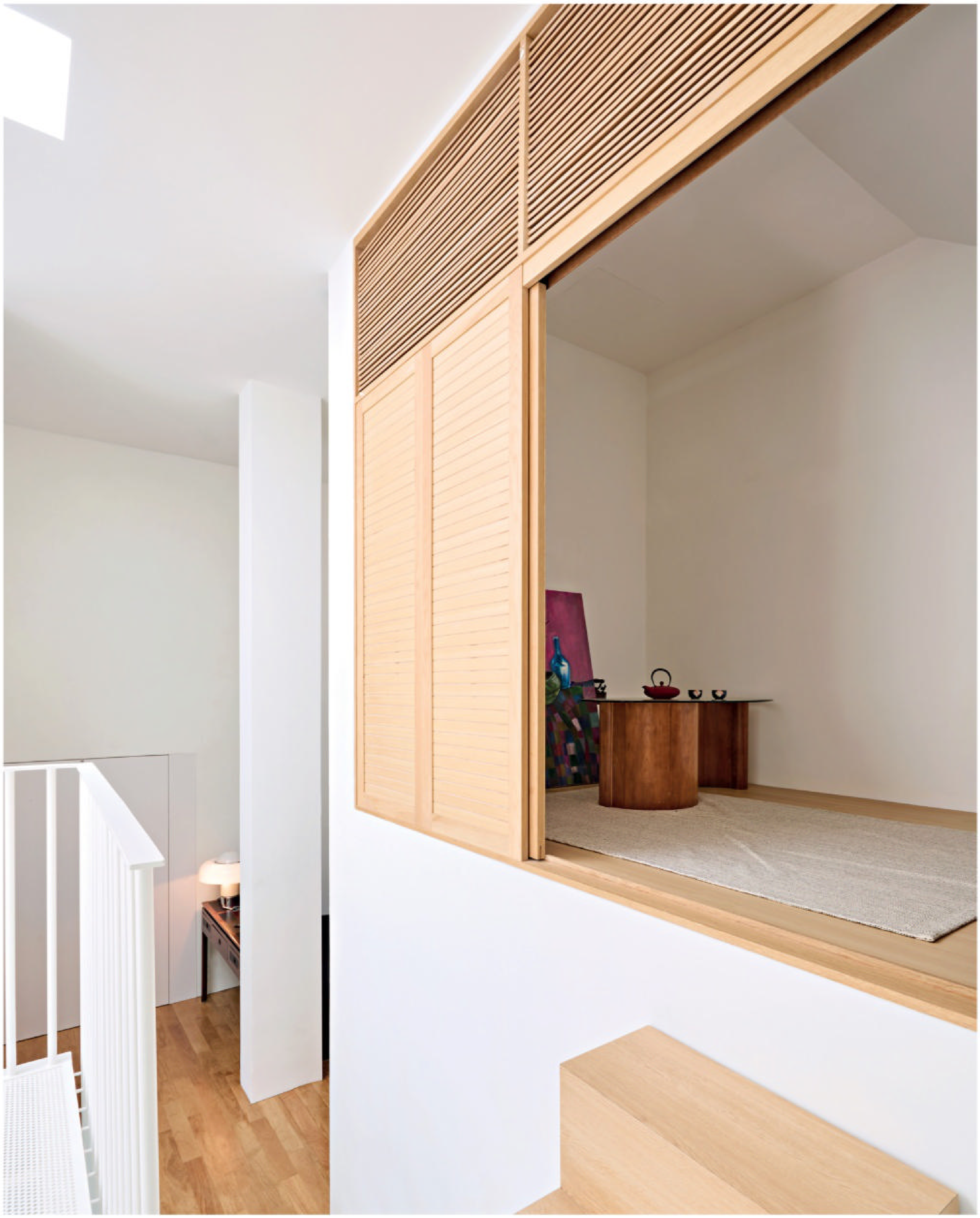
The living area on the first storey is a semi-open, naturally-ventilated space where the homeowner can host family and friends. It is almost like a very generous entrance foyer, but being set back from the front gate and ▶



RIGHT
Fiona made use of the space above the metal deck to create a 'secret' nook.

OPPOSITE TOP
The metal deck allows natural light to filter from the skylight above through the steel perforations to the spaces below, thereby reducing the need for artificial lighting during the day.

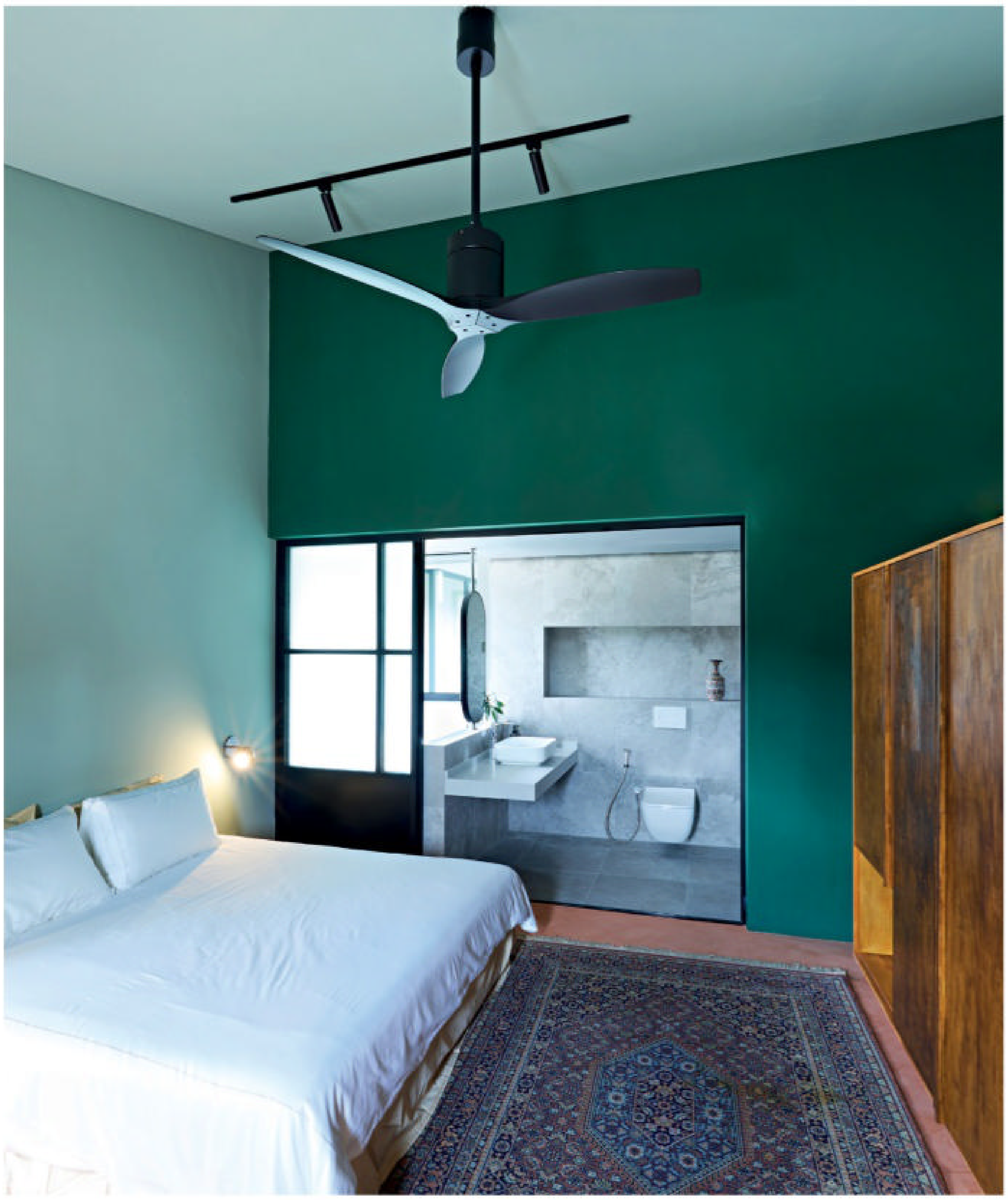
OPPOSITE RIGHT
A lightweight, perforated steel deck is inserted in-between the guest room and the daughter's room. This makes for a conducive reading area.



car porch accords it with the appropriate semi-private spatial hierarchy. It is not enclosed by doors or walls and borrowed views from the perimeter garden and the street beyond connects the space with the outdoors and adds to its expansive feel. As the family values their privacy, landscaping on either side of the perforated metal fence along the boundary provides three layers of additional buffer from external disturbances and prying eyes.

Fiona took advantage of the sloping site topography to demarcate the thresholds between spaces. A sunken patio between the semi-open living area and the dining room not only provides the family a space where they can sit and play with their Boxer. The difference in level plays up the transition from the semi-open living and patio into the dining room and also draws attention to the powder room that is expressed as a "black box". The black textured steel cladding of the powder room forms the backdrop to the semi-open living area. This reflects Fiona's strategy of elevating bathrooms from their utilitarian function into spatial separators. ▶

DAVID WAS OPEN TO A MORE EXPERIMENTAL PALETTE OF MATERIALS, WHICH ALLOWED FIONA TO EXPLORE THE USE OF DIFFERENT MATERIALS, COLOURS AND TEXTURES.



OPPOSITE
The green walls and reddish microcement floor in the guest room offer guests a playful, yet restful space.

TOP
The wardrobe in the guest room is designed with wheels to allow the flexibility of moving it according to the guest's needs.

Planter boxes on the façades provide rooms with a view of greenery that maintains a connection with the outdoors. Balconies allow bedrooms to be set back from the external envelope, thereby offering added protection from the sun, as well as more privacy.

Fun and Materiality

David was open to a more experimental palette of materials, which allowed Fiona to explore the use of different materials, colours and textures. "I chose to keep the material palette understated and raw so as to give prominence to the hand of the builder, as opposed to a clean or sterile aesthetic," Fiona highlights.

A redbrick feature wall that wraps around the front and side elevations was the result of countless design iterations and working with the supplier and craftsman to achieve the desired ▶

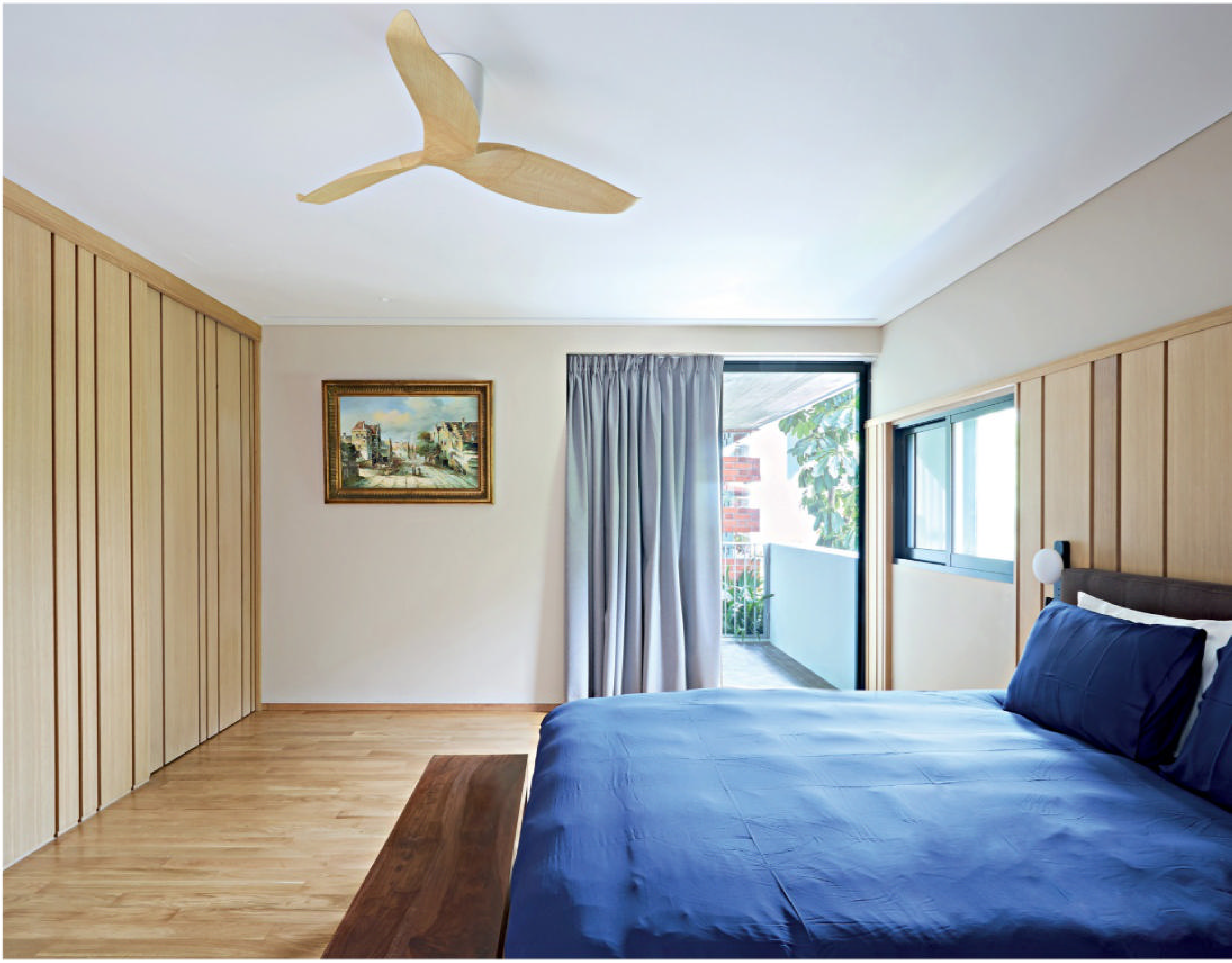
porosity that would allow light to filter through the bricks into the spaces within.

Portholes reminiscent of aircraft or ship cabins celebrate common bathroom spaces that are conventionally utilitarian while providing a playful and unique way of introducing daylight and ventilation.

Instead of a plain ceiling board, pine wood formwork creates an interesting textured imprint on the off-form concrete ceiling in some of the key spaces to enhance the character of the spaces.

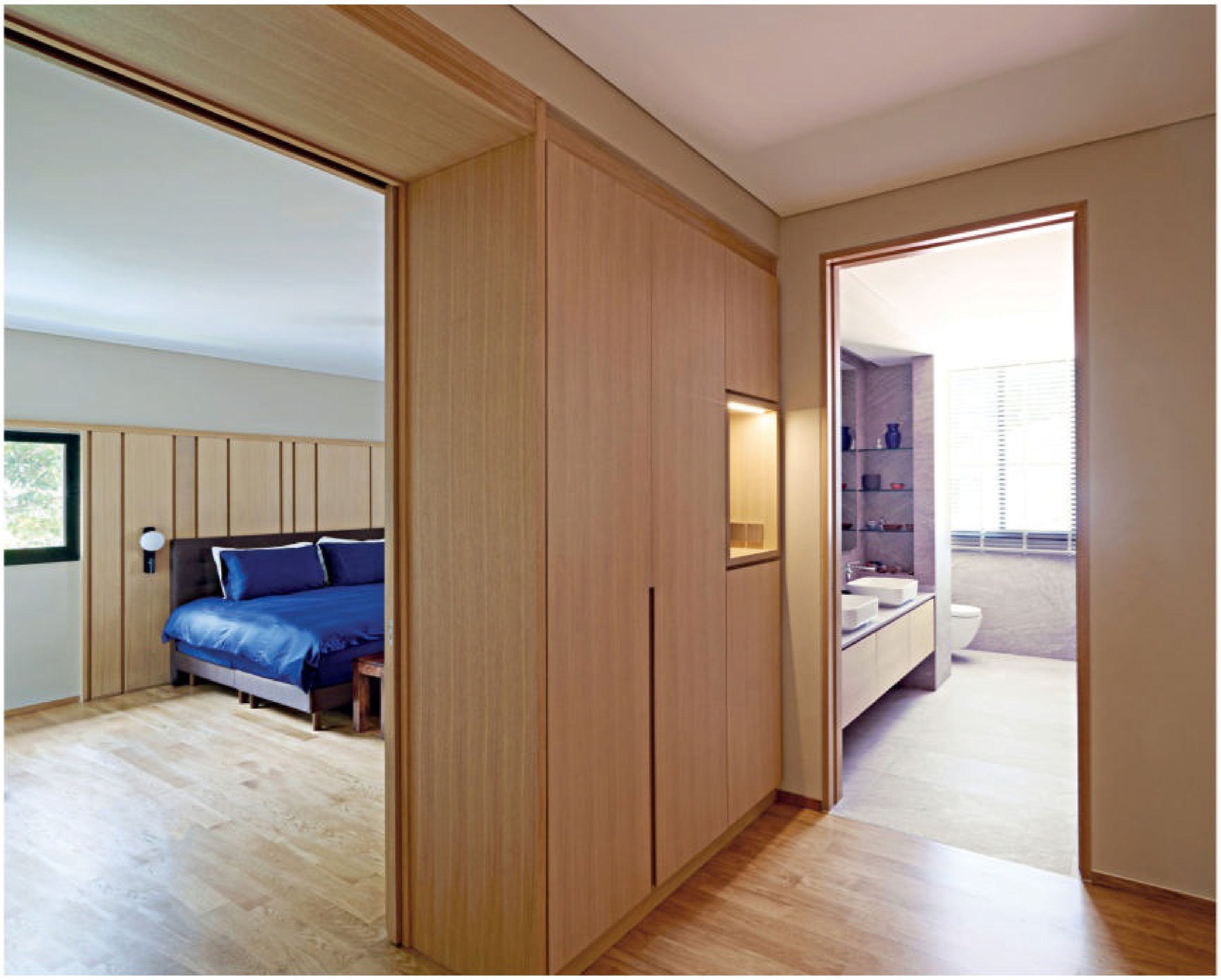
This project encapsulates Atelier IF's design philosophy of embracing the craft of the builder while crafting bespoke spaces that reflect the clients' lifestyles and personalities. "Through experimenting with materials and proportions, we endeavour to create unique spaces that offer a sense of delight and surprising moments for the users without being too rigid. It is important that these spaces allow for the flexibility to grow with the users' evolving needs," says Fiona. ■

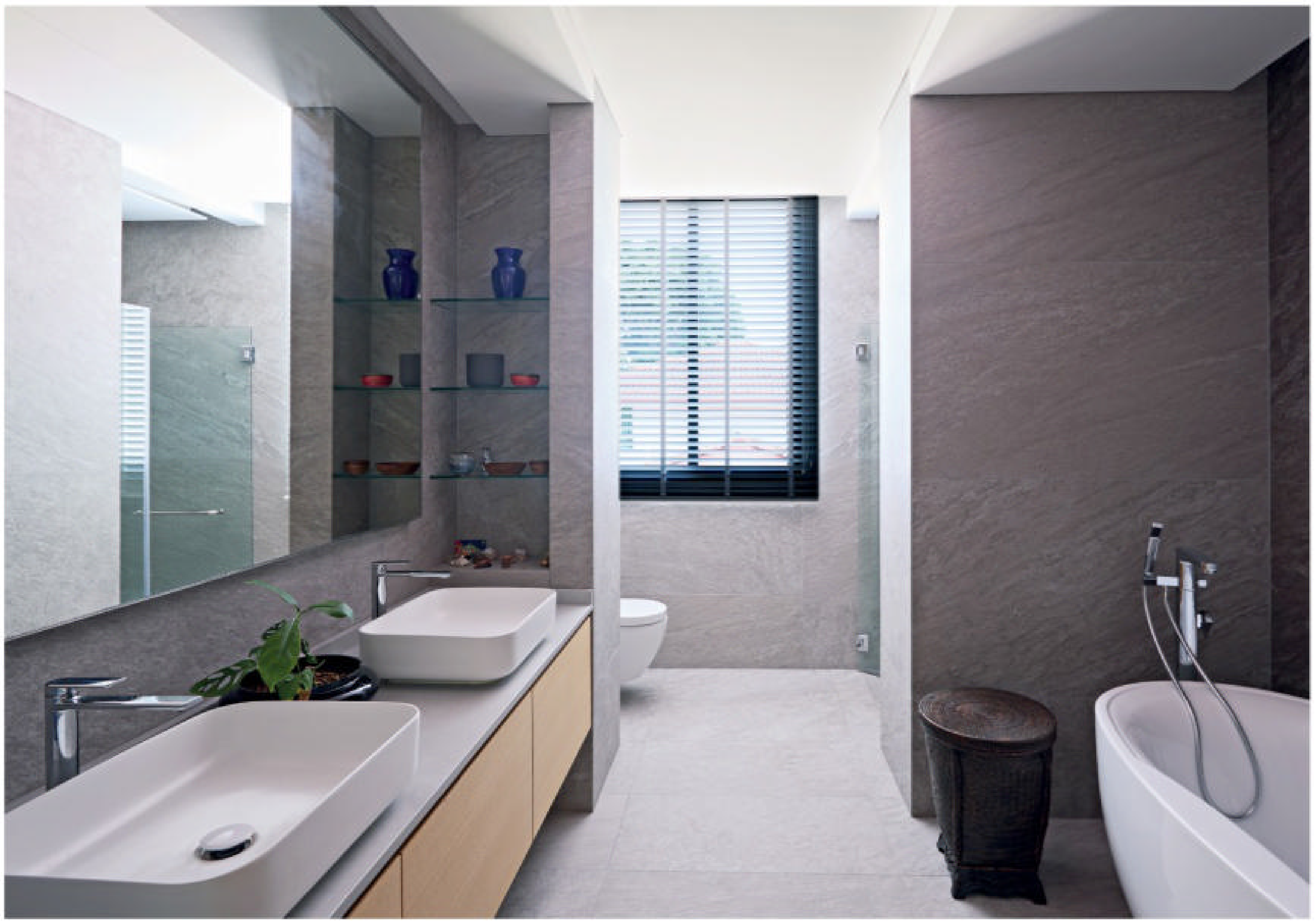
BELOW
The master bedroom has two means of access- via the walk-in wardrobe or the balcony. This minimises disturbance to the couple on occasions when their sleep patterns may vary.



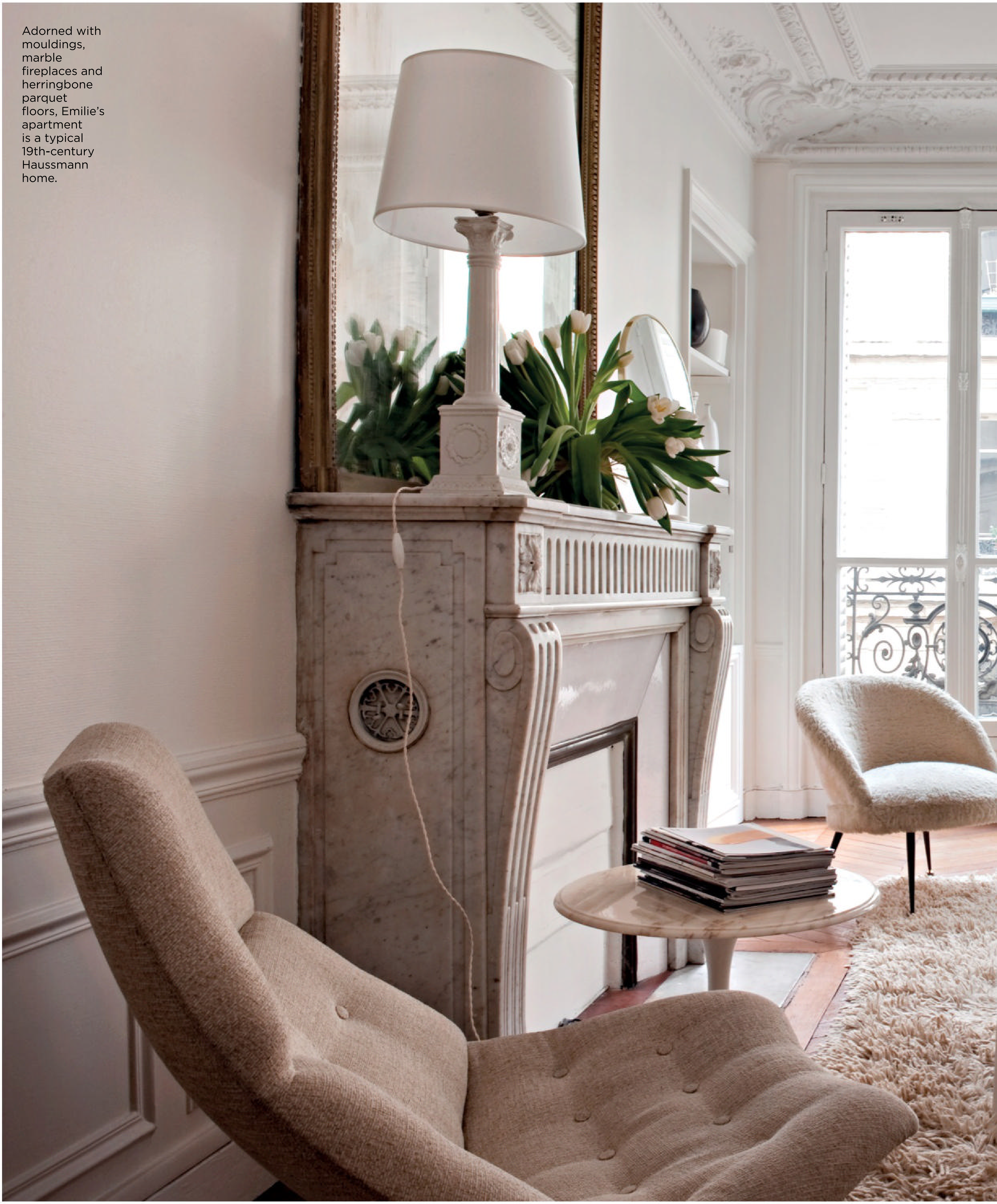
RIGHT
A timber pocket door separates the walk-in wardrobe from the sleeping area within the master bedroom.

BOTTOM
The master bathroom is spacious and light-filled. The layout allows the couple to use the bathroom simultaneously without getting in each other's way.





photography **VERONICA TAY & ATHIRAH ANNISSA** art direction **NONIE CHEN & KRISTY QUAH**



Adorned with mouldings, marble fireplaces and herringbone parquet floors, Emilie's apartment is a typical 19th-century Haussmann home.

EMILIE IN PARIS

French interior designer Emilie Bonaventure shares with KARINE MONIE why she has fallen in love with her Parisian apartment and how she has made it a home.

la lumière parle

“AN OBJECT IS A PIECE OF THE SELF, A PIECE OF ONE’S PERSONAL PUZZLE”

- EMILIE BONAVENTURE

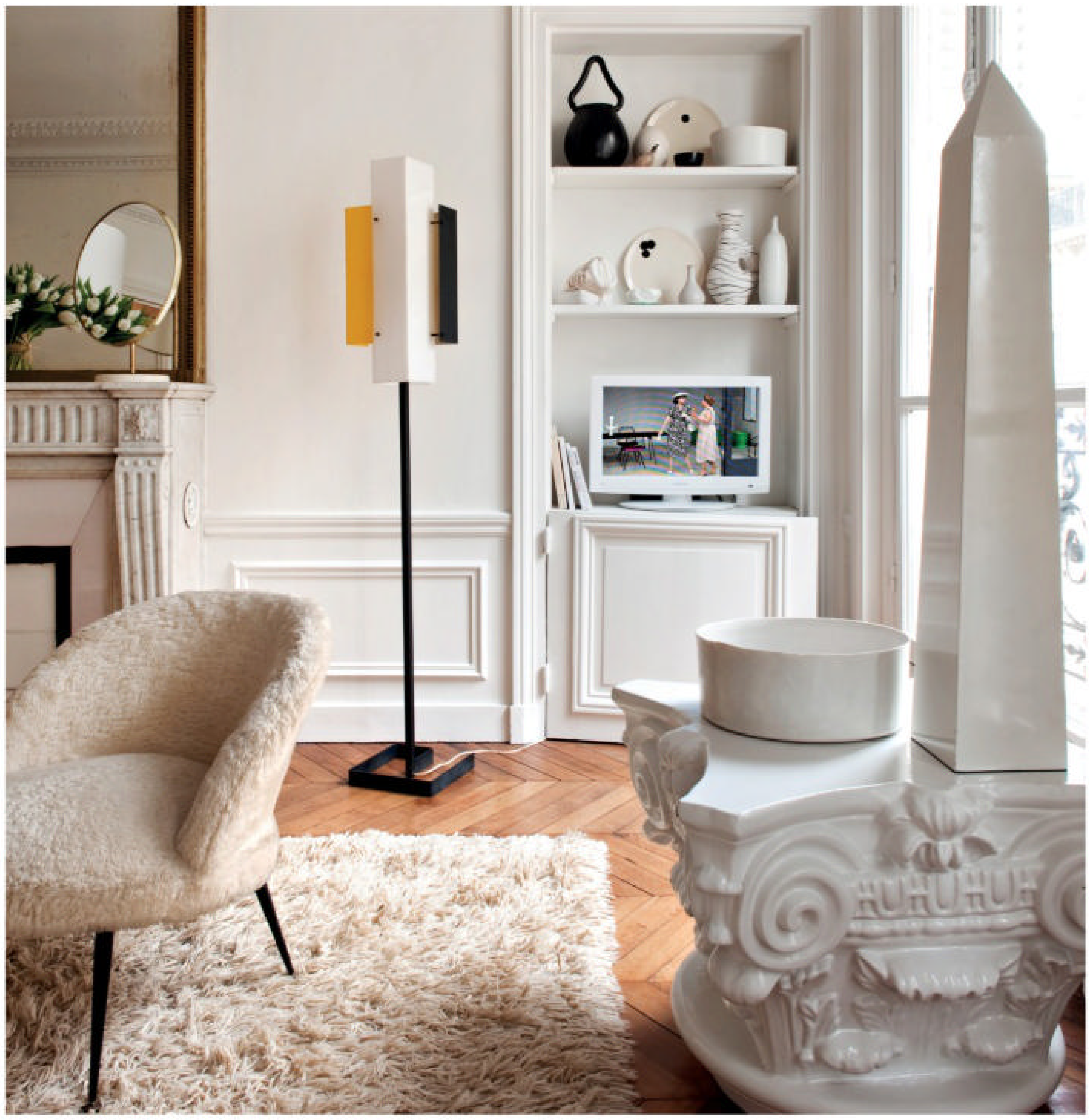
Emilie Bonaventure wanted to live in—in her words—“a very Parisian apartment.” She has loved the vibrant 9th arrondissement since she was a child, so finding her home in the Pigalle area was a dream come true.

A French interior architect and designer, expert in art and decoration, curator and aficionado of fashion and gastronomy, Emilie has multiple talents. After studying art history at the renowned Ecole du Louvre, she started her professional path first working for an antique dealer and then for an interior designer before launching her own studio, Be-Attitude, in Paris in 2005. Emilie’s projects (which are mostly in restaurants, harkening back to her parents’ careers as restaurant owners) embody her interdisciplinary approach where art, architecture and design interact.

Located on the charming Rue des Martyrs in the Montmartre neighbourhood, Emilie’s apartment doubled as her studio for several years, but continues to be her personal refuge. She would work with her team in her dining room, where the concept for Rose Bakery Tea Room—inside Paris’s Le Bon Marche department store—was born. Today, Emilie has a separate office, a few steps from her airy residence.

Adorned with mouldings, marble fireplaces and herringbone parquet floors, Emilie’s apartment is a typical 19th-century Haussmann home filled with natural light, which enters from both sides. In contrast with her usually colourful projects, the French designer chose to paint the walls of her apartment in Wimborne White from Farrow & Ball, and mostly focus on a neutral palette with ivory, cream and touches of caramel and black, creating a serene atmosphere primed for rest and relaxation.

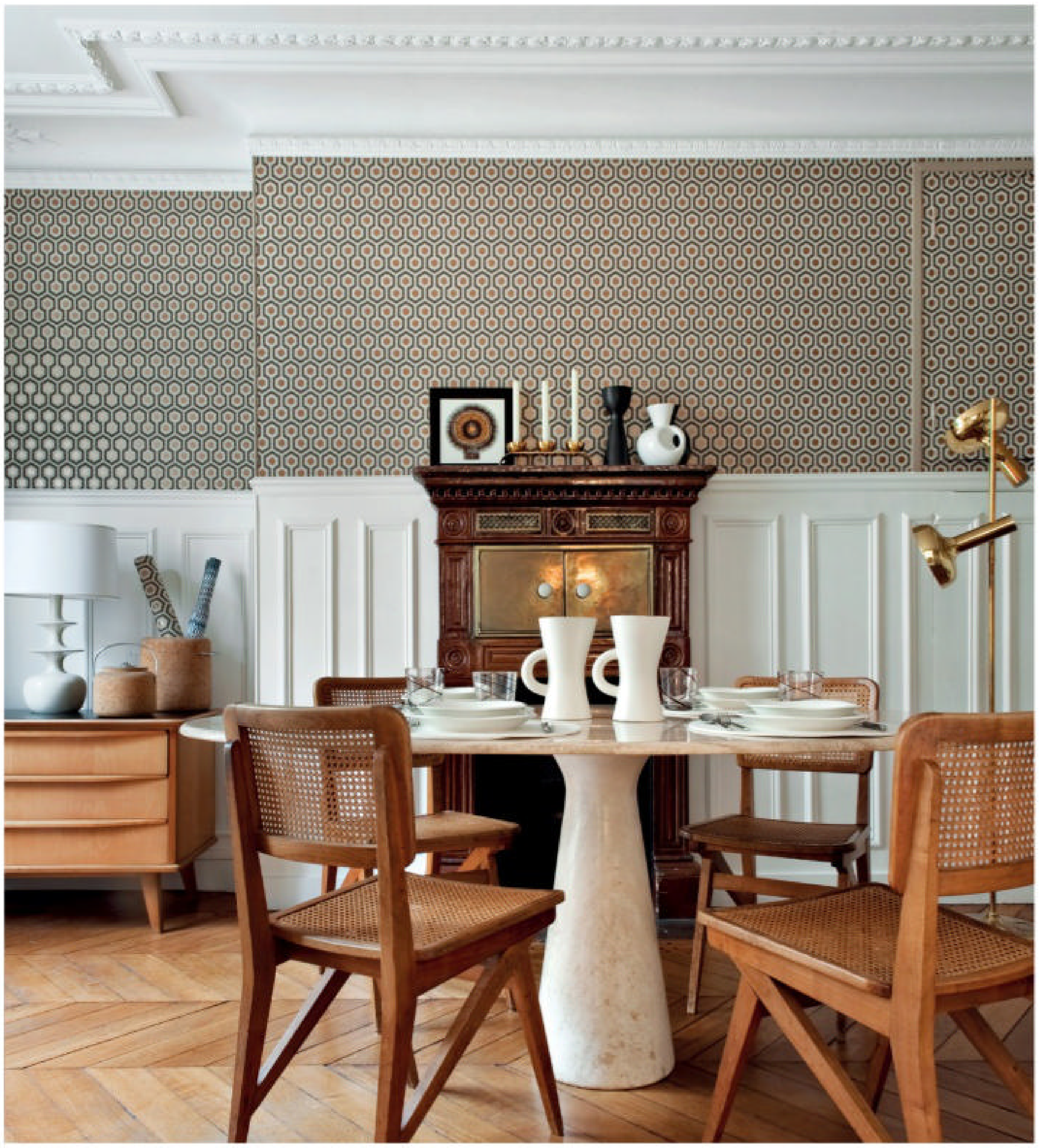
For Emilie, every object tells a story. “An object is a piece of the self, a piece of one’s personal puzzle”, she says. Searching for furniture with history and soul, Emilie visited many flea markets—something that she loves—including the famous Marche aux Puces de Saint-Ouen, located in the outskirts



of Paris. Chairs, tables and lighting from the 40s, 50s and 60s complement contemporary artworks throughout the space.

In the living room, an ivory Chesterfield sofa in skai, a Geoffrey Harcourt armchair upholstered in its original fabric, a vintage small easy chair and a pair of tables by C&B Italia sit on a rug from the 1970s. A Corinthian column, an obelisk in ceramic, a Jean Boris Lacroix lamp from Galerie Jacques Lacoste and a collection of black-and-white ceramics are some of the many surprises. On the wall, the neon artwork "La lumiere parle" (French for "the light talks") is Emilie's favourite piece; it reflects her consideration of light as an essential element in human environments.

In the dining room, the old Prussian fireplace provided the initial inspiration for the rest of the space's decor. The Hick's Hexagon wallpaper from Au fil des Couleurs introduces colour and rhythm to the space furnished with a travertine ▶



LEFT
The hexagon wallpaper design is an instant stunned in the dining room.

BOTTOM LEFT
Swatches and textiles can be seen around the home, partly owing to her work.

BOTTOM RIGHT
Interesting artworks atop the fireplace in the bedroom.

OPPOSITE
The mostly white interiors create the perfect canvas for showcasing the designer's eclectic style.

table by Angelo Mangiarotti, 1950s-era woven wicker chairs, a Swiss-designed chest of drawers and a brass lamp from the 1970s.

Clearly contrasting with the white scheme, the black and grey kitchen is an important space for Emilie.

"I am a big fan of cooking, for which I have my parents to thank", she says. "When I was eight, I had the chance to eat with French chef Marc Veyrat, an experience I've never forgotten. The mix of curiosity, imagination, creation and professionalism which characterises him has become a real example to me, a way of thinking."

Among the lacquered black surfaces and cabinets, jugs and cups by ceramist Pol Chambost, a photograph by Gary Gunderson and a print by Pierre Soulages reflect Emilie's tastes, while the spot carpet—which reminds her of Sonia Rykiel—adds a surprising, bold twist.

The soft, peaceful ambience continues in the bedroom, warmly decorated with a cowhide rug, a glass table, an easy chair, a furry cushion from Home Autour du Monde, a vase by Edmond Lachenal and a sculpture by Pol Chambost, among other pieces.

Interested in creating a dialogue between objects and their environment, Emilie has experimented in her home, proving that eclecticism can go hand in hand with harmony. ■

Antiquites

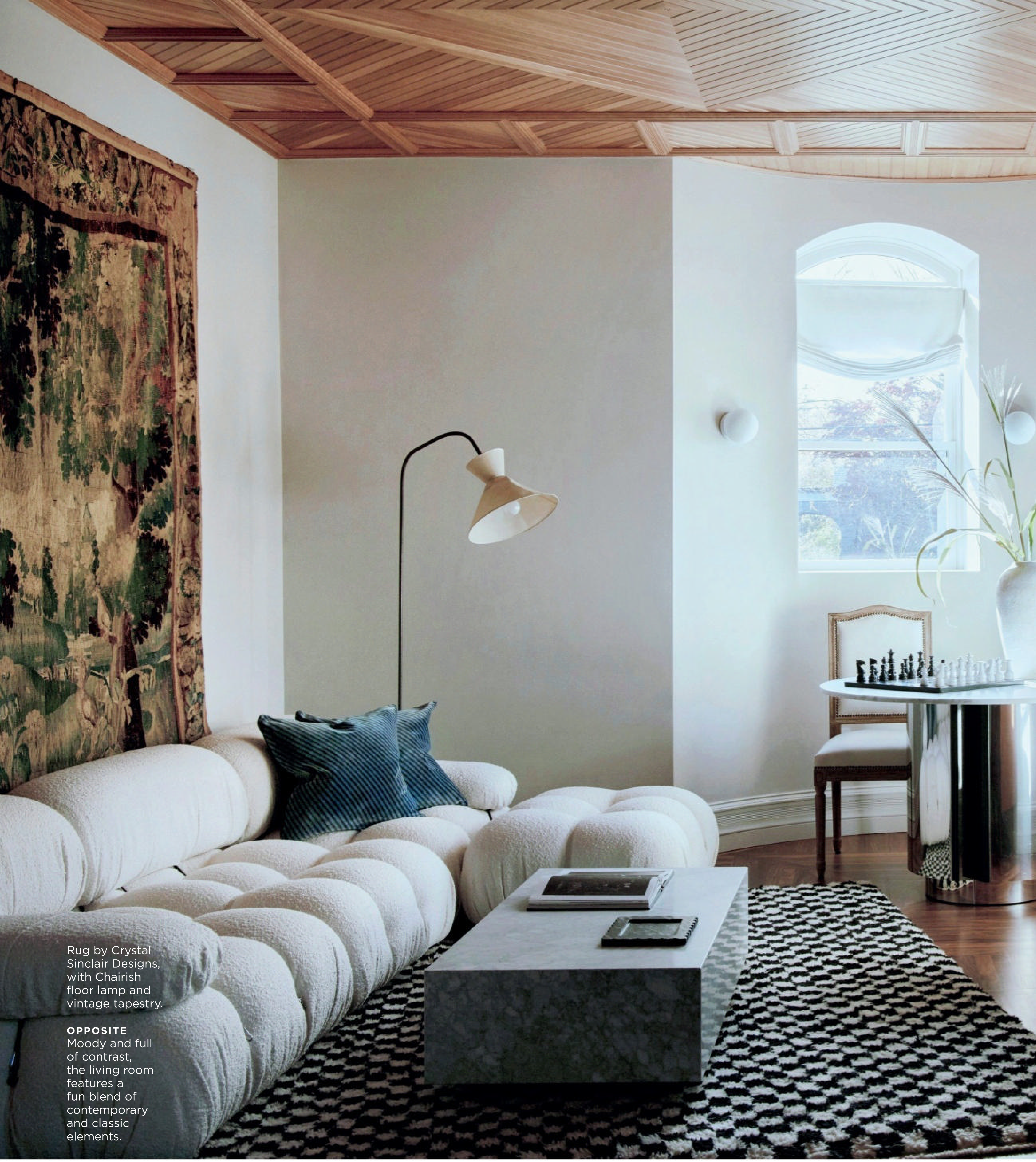
ABOVE
Light colours dominate in the bedroom.

BELOW LEFT
The designer loves objects with interesting silhouettes.

BELOW RIGHT
Instead of a single mirror, the homeowner opted for several panes in different shapes to create a conversation in the bathroom.

OPPOSITE
The black and white kitchen contrasts dramatically with the rest of the home.

photos NICOLAS MATHEUS

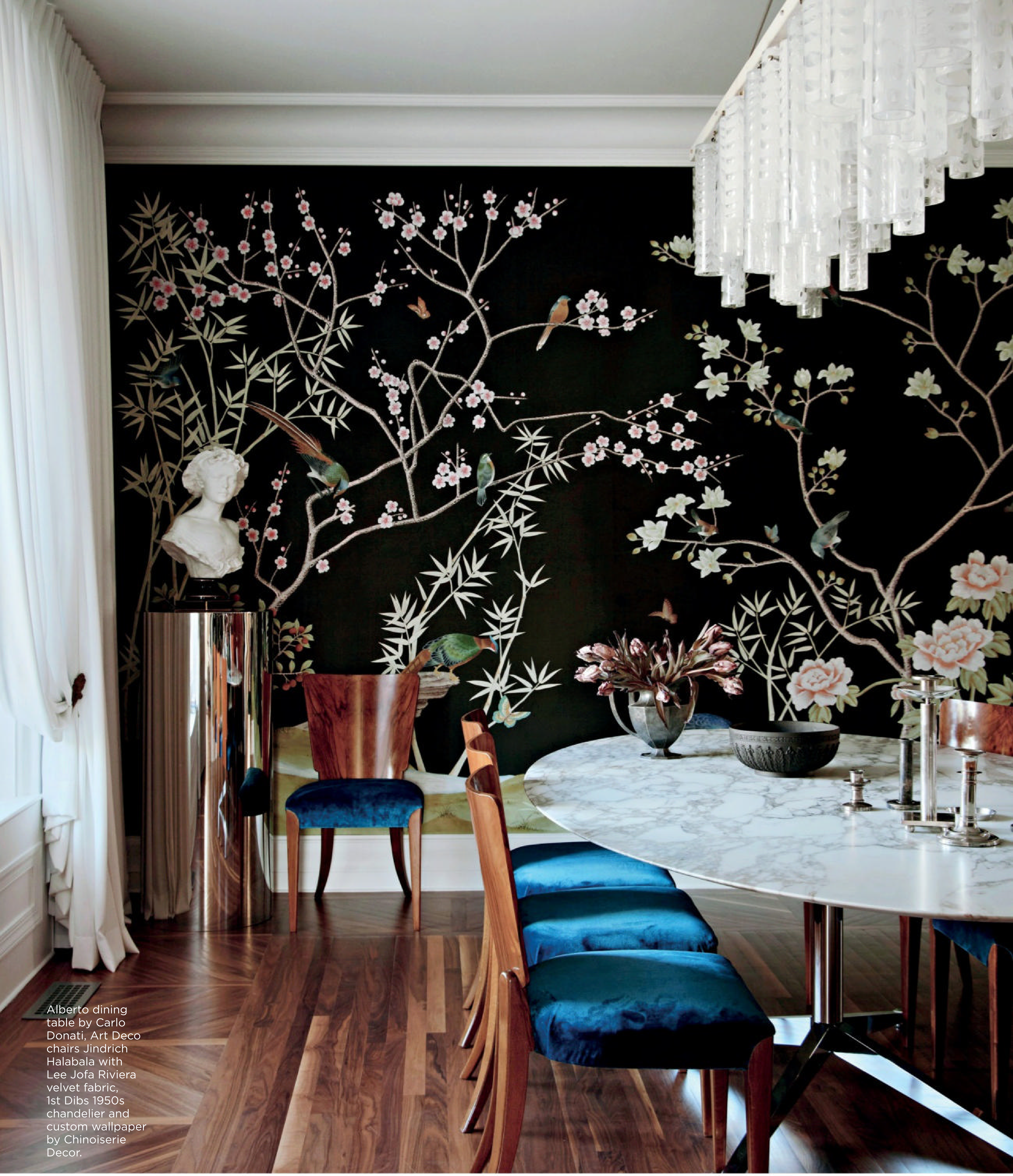


Rug by Crystal Sinclair Designs, with Chairish floor lamp and vintage tapestry.

OPPOSITE Moody and full of contrast, the living room features a fun blend of contemporary and classic elements.

PERFECT BLEND

KARINE MONIE speaks with the founder of Crystal Sinclair Designs to learn more about the inspiration behind the New York City home of a producer and his family.



Alberto dining table by Carlo Donati, Art Deco chairs Jindrich Halabala with Lee Jofa Riviera velvet fabric, 1st Dibs 1950s chandelier and custom wallpaper by Chinoiserie Decor.

Removed from the bling of the entertainment industry, J.B. Miller — an Emmy-Award winning producer, and president and CEO of Empire Entertainment, which has presented musical artists such as Alicia Keys, Elton John and Rihanna, as well as famous comedians and speakers — and his wife Maggie, chose the charming village of Larchmont, north of New York City, to raise their two children in a peaceful environment.

Looking for the perfect family home, they opted for a Victorian house built in 1888 that they decided to renovate to fit their needs and make it correspond to their taste. Based in New York, the team of Crystal Sinclair Designs led by Crystal Sinclair and her husband, Ben, tackled the challenge of meeting the owners' tight deadline.

"We began work at the beginning of 2022 and wrapped up the main floor in October," remembers Crystal. "We needed to have the kitchen complete for move-in and we had 80 per cent of the furniture delivered and installed before that time too."

The project, however, ran pretty smoothly. While the ▶

ABOVE
Island pendants by DeVol - Large Narrow Pleat Porcelain Light and Holden stools by Ballard Designs.

ABOVE, LEFT
Different materials and textures were combined in every nook.

designers are still renovating the basement — where a fun play gym will be installed, as well as an office — the main interior spaces feature their new look.

The starting point for Crystal was the idea of a beautiful tapestry combined with a Camaleonda-style sofa, basing her inspiration on "old world meets the new world." According to her, "that pairing is what everything is based off of."

Mainly neutral, the color palette comprises different tones of blue for a soft and organic feel. Wood, chrome, boucle and velvet are some of the materials that combine throughout and reinforce the mix of classic pieces with modern touches.

Part of the interior designer's CSD rug collection, the rugs add more texture while boldness was achieved through some of the furniture and decorative elements, including the wallpaper in the dining room. Pieces from RH, Ballard Designs, 1stdibs, Chairish, Lawson-Fenning, West Elm, Knoll, Eternity Modern, Pottery Barn and Ferm Living, among other brands and designers, are characterised by their soft curves, geometric patterns or vintage aesthetic.

Family-friendly and welcoming, the home is ideal for both entertaining and everyday life with kids.

While the interiors feel calm, some surprising elements throughout make the home "sing" according to Crystal, and this is what gives the house its enigmatic magic. ■

LEFT
Vintage side table, Chairish lamp, The Shade Store draperies and Parachute bedding.

OPPOSITE TOP
The cabinets are painted in Templeton Gray by Benjamin Moore, the pulls are by Rejuvenation and the vintage runner is from Etsy.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT
Antique French carved Louis XVI Style Musical Instruments Giltwood Mirror and Beaumaris - Edward wallpaper by Fine and Dandy.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT
This welcoming and family-friendly home was transformed by Crystal Sinclair Designs.

photos WILLIAM JESS LAIRD styling MARIANA MARCKI-MATOS

The updated interiors within this historical home enjoys plenty of natural light and clean, modern lines.

REVIVING A HOUSE WITH A PEDIGREE

In Chicago, this late 19th-century home was totally transformed to welcome a new chapter in its rich legacy. Interior designer Cari Giannoulias shares with KARINE MONIE the property's history and makeover.

"This historical mansion became an obsession for both the homeowners and me," confesses Cari Giannoulias, founder of Cari Giannoulias Design. "Having worked together on a previous home, we went to see the listing and it was love at first sight. The condition of the space would have been a deterrent for many, but this only drew us in further."

Despite the cracked and stained ceilings, the mildewed walls and the unsalvageable floors and wainscoting, "the house was magnificent" according to the interior designer. "It just needed saving." And that is exactly what she did.

Cari recommended the homeowners — one of whom owns a steel company with his family, while the other is an artist — to hire the studio En Masse for the architecture. "The house was very segregated — staircases that lead nowhere, rooms that didn't function — and the team at En Masse did an incredible job of making the home current."

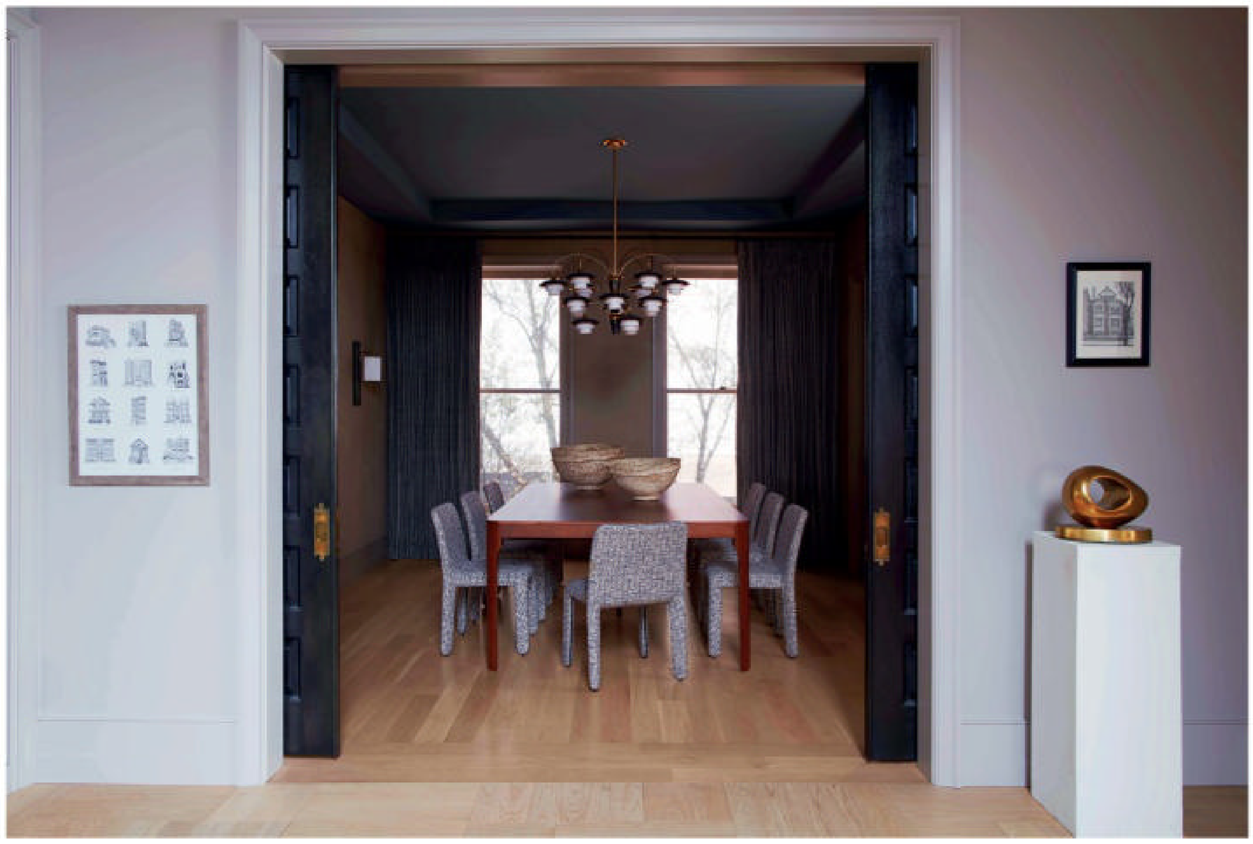
Located in Chicago and built in 1894, the house features a Romanesque Revival style with signature characteristics, such as rusticated ashlar stone walls, picturesque massing with a two-storey front bay, foliate ornamentation and arched openings. Spread over 697 sqm, it comprises a main floor, a basement and a second floor, with the third level used for guests. While the living room/kitchen is characterised by its open floor, the rest of the home maintains separate living spaces.

Several renowned people once resided in this iconic property — including successful entrepreneur of German/Scandinavian heritage Paul J. Benson, who gave his name to the house, and Agnes Nering, who ran her school of singing and dancing in the attic until her death in 1922. "To access the basement, you could walk down a ramp used to smuggle in liquor during Prohibition," Cari says of wanting to pay tribute to such a rich history through the renovation. Preserving ▶

LEFT
Large double doors open onto the main entrance foyer.

LOWER LEFT
The main staircase in the home was preserved and updated with new banister caps.

OPPOSITE
The area at the front of the home was converted into a casual dining spot, flanked by lush greenery.



ABOVE
Textured wallpaper and upholstery help to tell an interesting story in each room.

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT
In spite of its colourful past, the bedroom in the house evokes a contemporary and chic atmosphere.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT
Key architectural items were retained as an ode to the home's history.

the original character while introducing a more modern twist guided the whole project.

"The biggest design challenge for this home was [finding] how to make it feel current and curated without compromising the historical integrity or appearing disingenuous," she recalls. "Whether it was redesigning the large staircase window, refinishing the front doors or selecting lighting for the foyer, the narrative had to be the same or related."

The house itself was the main source of inspiration. The grand paneled doors with brass hardware, the fireplace millwork, the original staircase and the front door metalwork were preserved in the different spaces that came alive through materials and textures.

"The lighting and furniture could live in any period — some [pieces were] crafted years ago while others newly forged by current creative minds," Cari says. "These carefully purposeful moments blending styles and eras allow the house to feel timeless."

In the common areas, the idea was to focus on natural light so very little color was used. Instead, the darker rooms such as the lounge and the powder room were adorned with richer tones.

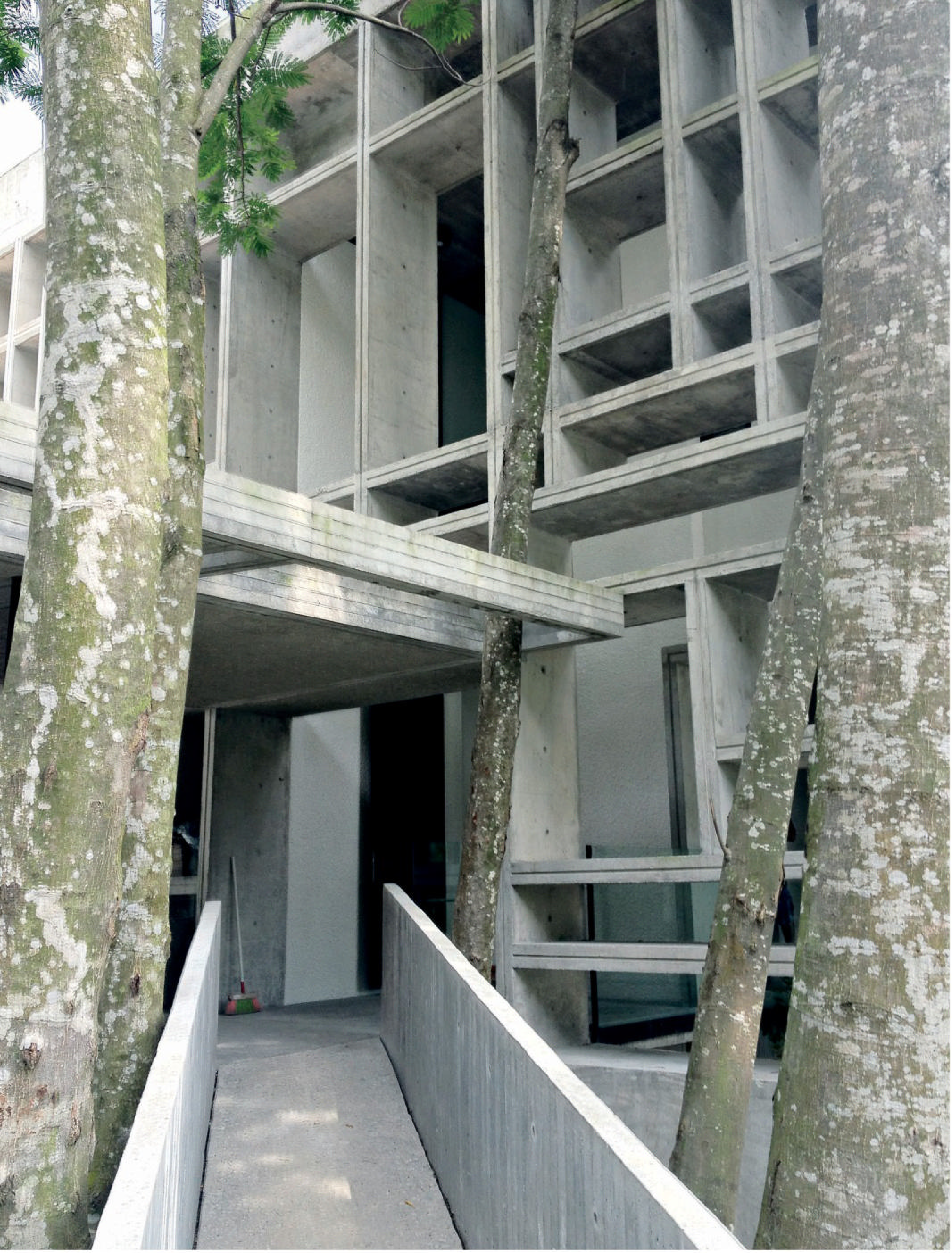
The main bedroom, office and dining room reflects a sense of calm and depth without being boring thanks to the use of textural wallpapers.

Vintage pieces from all over the world offer visual surprises in every nook.

"They grounded the space and gave it a base from which to develop," the interior designer says, "From there, I shifted focus to creating a comfortable atmosphere with upholstered items and utilising textural fabrics that are easy to maintain. Working with materials that have a patina or a history to them is a priority for me; they help tell a story."

In this gentlemen's retreat that feels intimate and fluid between the rooms, Cari managed to find a way to honour the spirit of a bygone era while adding the necessary ingredients for its contemporary renaissance. ■

photos **ISABEL PARRA**

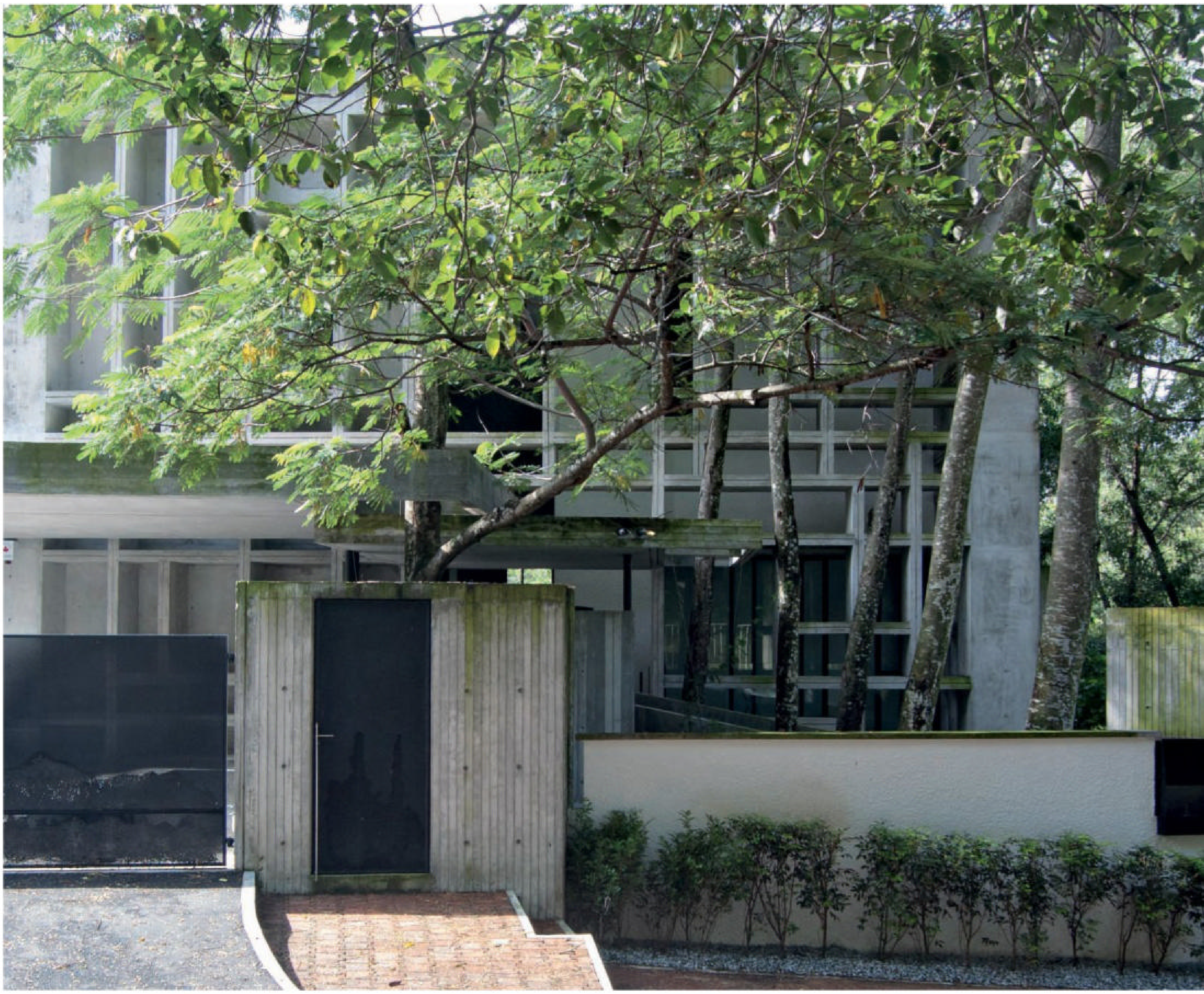


LEFT
The main approach to the house is via a bridge flanked by multiple mature Albizia trees.

OPPOSITE
The house displays an adherence to modernist principles, as well as an affinity with their immediate surroundings.

THE GREEN HOUSE EFFECT

WHBC Architects' concrete tropical box embraces the lush jungle and manages to blur the lines between inside and outside.



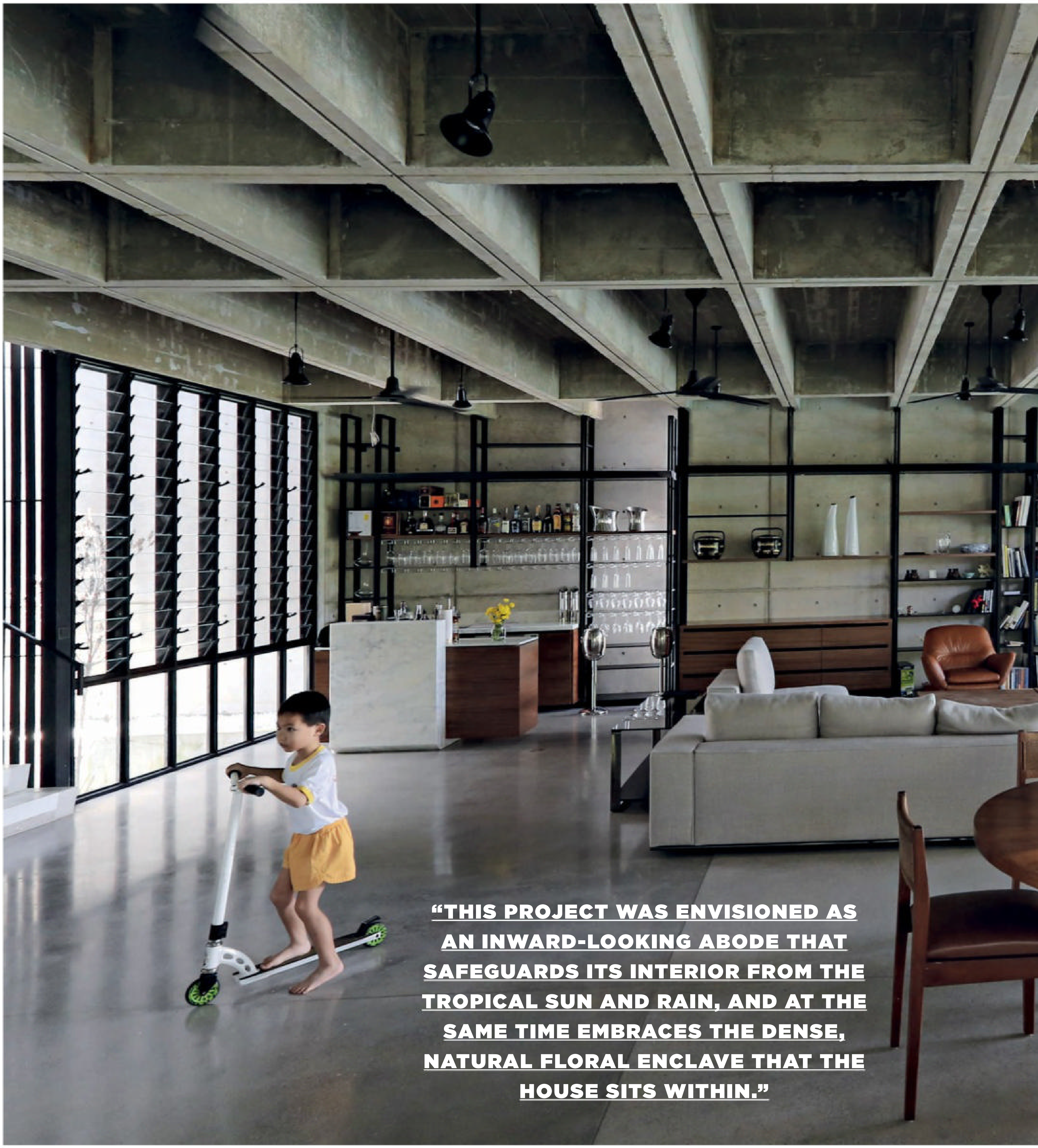
Like luxury cars, designer handbags, and high-end mechanical watches, palatial homes are often built to telegraph wealth. Its size, locale, and contents are brandished like a kind of status symbol to communicate to the world at large that "I've made it!" Nonetheless, even in a city with its fair share of conspicuous consumers like Kuala Lumpur, there are those who place importance on other values. A wonderful example of this backlash of bigger-is-better, and rejection that flash-is-best, is the Chempenai House, an intimate, almost minimalistic dwelling designed by WHBC Architects. The house displays an adherence to modernist principles, as well as an affinity with their immediate surroundings.

Situated on a slope in the affluent suburb of Damansara Heights, the Chempenai House is something of a curiosity in a neighbourhood, dominated by ostentatious mansions and posh condominiums. In stark contrast to its more extravagant counterparts, its bare concrete surfaces are austere and understated. Moreover, the home appears to not even want to be found, half-hidden as it is among lush tropical trees and vegetation. While the lush profusion of foliage appears completely natural, a lot of planning went into making this tableau look so effortless. "The site is really interesting and surrounded by green. When we first visited the site, the neighbouring lot was coming up quite extensively and overlooking our lot. Therefore, we have a tall building on the ▶

OPPOSITE
The house was deliberately designed to look unassuming from the front entrance.

LEFT
The egg-crate structure is built of in-situ concrete.

BELOW
Many of the spaces appear completely surrounded by green foliage as they hover close to the tropical canopy.



“THIS PROJECT WAS ENVISIONED AS AN INWARD-LOOKING ABODE THAT SAFEGUARDS ITS INTERIOR FROM THE TROPICAL SUN AND RAIN, AND AT THE SAME TIME EMBRACES THE DENSE, NATURAL FLORAL ENCLAVE THAT THE HOUSE SITS WITHIN.”

LEFT
The living, dining and pool are positioned at the entry level and features concrete in various finishes.

BELOW
The furniture colour palette was similarly understated to keep the focus on the greenery.

eastern side and green patches on the west so it is subjected to the hot afternoon sun. Furthermore, the site is sloping downwards to the back. It hit us immediately: it is going to be a challenging job, and we loved it," reminisces Wen Hsia, co-founder of WHBC. "This project was envisioned as an inward-looking abode that safeguards its interior from the tropical sun and rain, and at the same time embraces the dense, natural floral enclave that the house sits within."

A concrete egg-crate structure was conceived so as to envelope the house to keep the heat out, while drawing daylight in to create comfortable spaces within. The perforated nature of this envelope allows the existing overgrowth to grow into the volume of the house, thus softening the boundaries of inside and outside. The egg-crate structure is built of in-situ concrete as a sun-filtering device at the depth of 900mm, and this generous depth naturally allows daylight to filter through, but resists radiation. Concrete fins of 150mm thickness further reinforce the structure by framing openings of various sizes at a controlled rhythm. This also facilitates the regulation of light intensity within while allowing the residents to follow the sun's trajectory throughout ▶

the day. Wen Hsia reveals that this animation of the light and shadow throughout the day is her favourite part of the house: “We are also happy and proud of the concrete details, and how the clients can comfortably enjoy the house and the green all day long even during the hottest and rainiest days.”

While the architects recognised from the beginning that the site would prove a challenge, they chose to work with the site rather than fight against it. For instance, where the existing site slopes downwards to the back from the entry level. The design takes advantage of the sloping terrain to keep the dampness and humidity out within a tropical environment. By arranging the spaces so as to keep most parts of the house raised from the ground, the house is elevated to sit among the canopy of trees. The main spaces – living, dining, and the pool are positioned at the entry level, and the bedrooms are placed on the upper floor. Finally, a garage and service area sits on the lower ground. This ensures that dampness and pests are kept away, keeping the house airy and dry.

Entering the Chempenai House, one gets the distinct impression that one has chanced upon the secret entrance to a jungle sanctuary. The main approach to the house is via a bridge flanked by multiple mature Albizia trees. From the entrance, a relatively narrow walkway, adjacent to a stairway and an internal courtyard leads to the open living area. Upon arrival, the journey then opens outwards to a double volume deck reflected upon a pool. The pool and the adjoining garden are enclosed within the volume of this egg-crate structure, while being completely surrounded by green foliage as they hover close to the tropical canopy. Looking beyond the pool and the garden, one is greeted with a clear and extended panoramic view of the forest. On the upper floors, windows are specially designed to capture views of big beautiful trees.

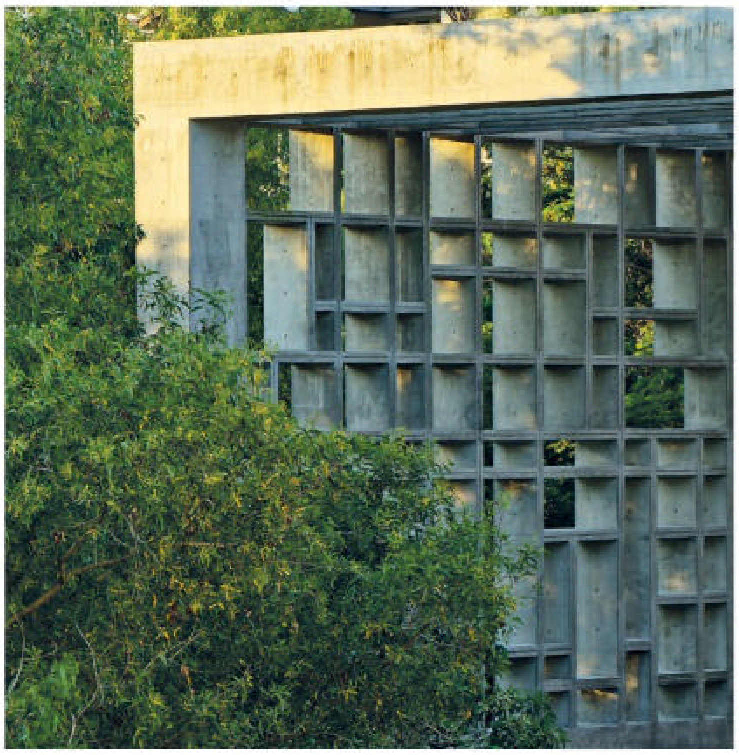
While concrete and nature may seem like unlikely bedfellows, WHBC’s seemingly heavy concrete box touches the ground lightly, placing itself among the trees and encouraging the enduring landscape to grow within it. This is largely due to the perforated façade which allows for the existing undergrowth to unfurl over surfaces in a consistent manner, as the house is slowly reclaimed by nature over time. The notion of a hidden sanctuary is thus reinforced as visual harmony is achieved through this gradual marriage of building and jungle. Indeed, living amidst such a tropical idyll, it’s unsurprising to find out that the clients love the house: “As the living area is well protected from the sun, it could be naturally ventilated throughout the day. At night, as the house is surrounded by so much green, the sound of the forest from all sorts of insects is really enchanting.” ■

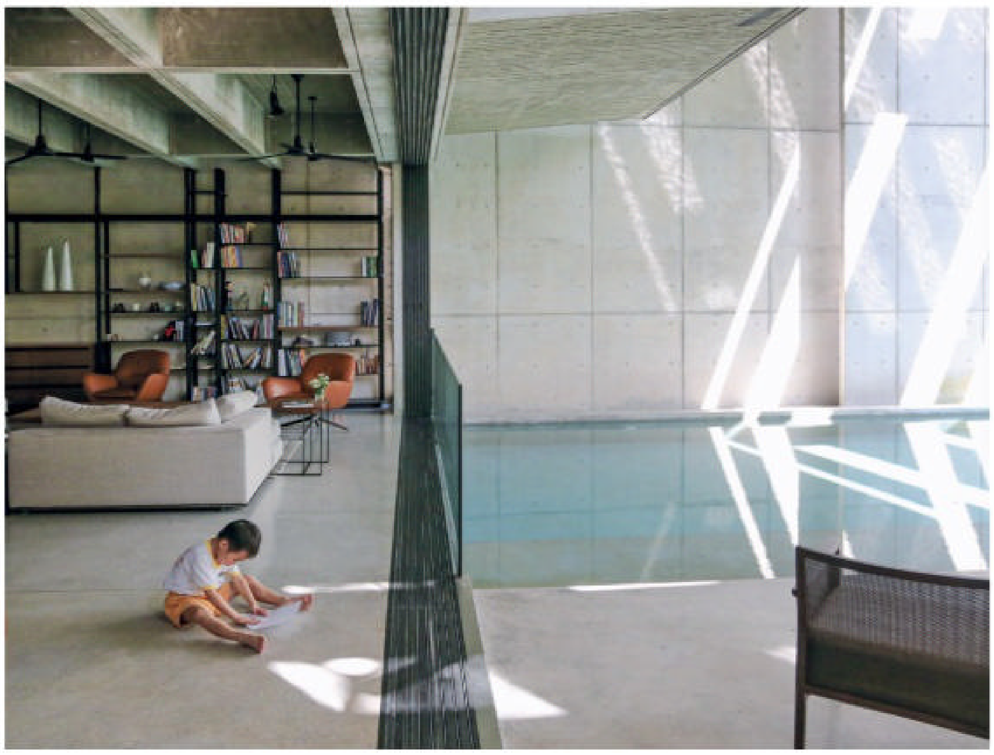
Minimal finishes and walnut wood reinforce the elegant simplicity of this house.

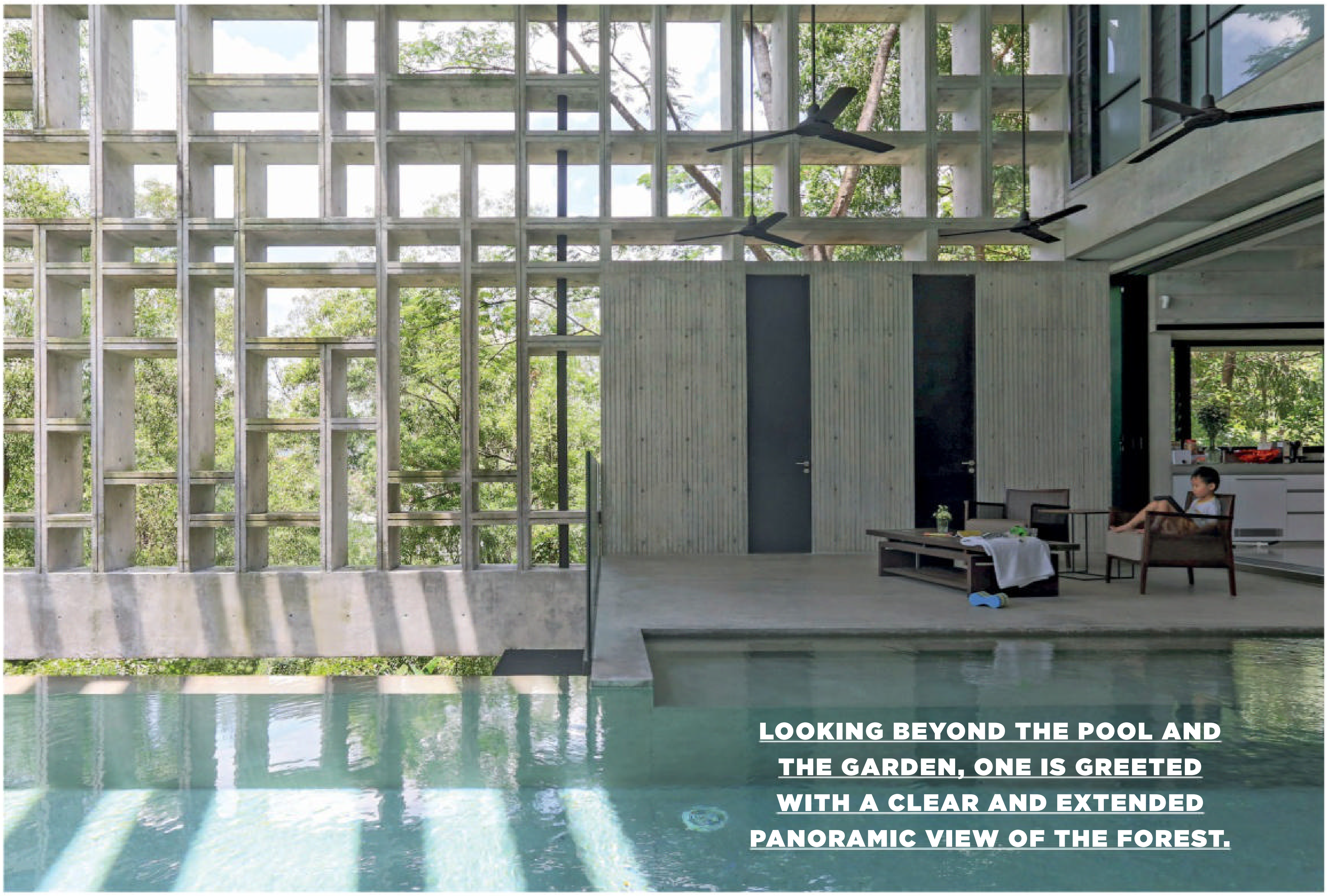
RIGHT
A concrete egg-crate structure envelopes the house to keep the heat out while drawing daylight in.

FAR RIGHT
Light and shadow animate the surfaces throughout the day.

BELOW
The ingenious design ensures that the family can enjoy the house even during the hottest part of the day and heavy rain.







LOOKING BEYOND THE POOL AND THE GARDEN, ONE IS GREETED WITH A CLEAR AND EXTENDED PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE FOREST.

text **AGATHA WONG** photography **KENT SOH**

ICEBAR
BY ICEHOTEL

TEXTURES AND TERRAINS

Experience the wonders of the world and all that nature has to offer, across terrains at these four amazing hotels. From mountainous regions to snow-capped splendor and sandy deserts, new marvels lie ahead.

PHOTO ASAF KLIGER

PHOTO CHRISTOPHER HAUSER

PHOTO ASAF KLIGER

PHOTO PAULINA HOLMGREN

ICEBAR Unique by Sofi Ruotsalainen, Mikael Nille Nilsson & Viktor Tsarski.

TOP RIGHT Art Suite White Desert designed by Timsam Harding & Fabián Jacquet Casado.

LEFT MAIN HALL SECRET GARDEN by Alessandro Falca & AnnaSofia Mååg.

RIGHT Art Suite Cumulus. Designed by Annakatrin Kraus & Hans Aescht.

ICE AND SNOW

ICEHOTEL, SWEDEN

A palace fit for the Ice Queen.

Warm up with a round of champagne at the ice bar, meet new friends, visit the ice church, or gallery, then turn in for the night by snuggling up against soft and warm fur throws. Sweden's ICEHOTEL features cold and warm rooms and chalets; the latest addition to the hotel, ICEHOTEL 365 allows guests a choice of art, and other luxury suites.

There's always something new to see for repeated guests as the hotel exhibits different art sculptures on a yearly basis. These sculptures of ice and snow are made by artists from all over the world. Visitors can also lay down their concerns for the hotel; far from melting away into the Torne River, where the hotel sources its ice, ICEHOTEL 365 is built on a former refridgeration plant, and as such remains intact throughout the year.

Hotel guests can enjoy a number of activities in the summer, where the nights are as bright as day. Canoeing, river rafting, fishing, or boat tours are available at the Torne River, the last of which ends with a comforting cup of coffee in wooden drinkware, made and enjoyed over an open fire at the riverbank.

The seasons of Spring and Fall are also enjoyable at ICEHOTEL, with the magnificent Northern lights creeping into the skies. Guests can enjoy these sights in a forest camp, away from the distractions of artificial life; they can also learn about local spa traditions and culture with the Jukkasjärvi Sauna Ritual and a five-day Sami Wildlife and Nature Photo trip.

Be sure to check out the list of activities, which differ by season, and look to midnight sun tours in the summer and year-round ice sculpting classes if you're interested! ▶

For more information, www.icehotel.com

HEZEN CAVE HOTEL, TURKEY

This is one cave we wouldn't mind staying in forever.

The natural cave bedrooms in Hezen Cave Hotel possess warm and welcoming charms. It's almost impossible to not curl up on a sofa and soak in the cosy and intimate atmosphere in private. Orange-tinted lights gently bathe the rooms in a warm glow, complementing the eclectic style of the interior.

While it may be tempting to lounge all day in the bedroom, guests should indeed head over to the hotel's terrace to enjoy magnificent views of the Ortahisar castle and old cave houses. There is also plenty to do if you're up for some exploration.

The hotel itself is located in Cappadocia, a hub for history buffs with a thirst for knowledge. Guests can visit and explore the grounds of historical sites, and experience local culture and architecture. An open-air museum of monasteries and churches, the National Gerome is also worth a visit, alongside the Ihlara Valley and the underground cities of Derinkuyu. Those well-versed in horseback riding can do so across valleys; a delightful alternative lies in a hot-air balloon ride across the beautiful landscapes. High-quality handcrafts are also available, and those looking to mark their trip with souvenirs can easily take home fine pottery, jewellery, and handmade carpets.

Guests who have explored their fill can enjoy baths in a ground-heated marble shower, or a Turkish Hamam-style bathroom overlooking common gardens. Custom-made toiletries complete the experience.

For more information, visit www.hezenhotel.com

ALL PHOTOS HEZEN HOTEL

DESERT

QASR AL SARAB DESERT RESORT BY ANANTARA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Beautiful sunsets and warm fine sand beneath your feet make for a memorable holiday.

Make your way across the Rub' al Khali, the largest unbroken stretch of sand in the world, in your preferred mode of transportation. Race off, dune bashing at top speed or go on in a leisurely pace with a camel.

The Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort is the perfect picture of a quiet, peaceful and serene retreat, topped off with a spa treatment evoking ancient hammam rituals. Guests can spend a romantic evening watching the sunset from the plunge pool in private villas, and dine under skies dotted with twinkling stars.

The resort offers a selection of rooms, suites, and villas to accommodate all needs and preferences. In the privacy of their pool villas, guests can soak up the sun on a deck, enjoying the amazing views of the desert while attended by a personal villa host to boot. The resort further personalises all guest experiences with a soap and pillow menu.

Look forward to lounging like royalty on daybeds, absorbing the immense richness of embroidered fabrics and Bedouin accents incorporated into the interiors of each villa. Music lovers will be pleased to know that the spaces are equipped with Bose Bluetooth speakers for the ultimate audiophile experience on holiday.

For more information, visit www.anantara.com/en/qasr-al-sarab-abu-dhabi ▶

ALL QASR AL SARAB DESERT RESORT BY ANANTARA

MOUNTAINS

BELLEVUE HOTEL & SPA - COGNE, ITALY

The least populated region in Italy, Valle d'Aosta is in no want of peace and serenity.

There's plenty to see and do at Bellevue Hotel & Spa, especially during summer and winter seasons. If you've dreamt of snow-capped alpine summits, green pastures, and stone-roofed villages, look no further than Cogne in Valle d'Aosta.

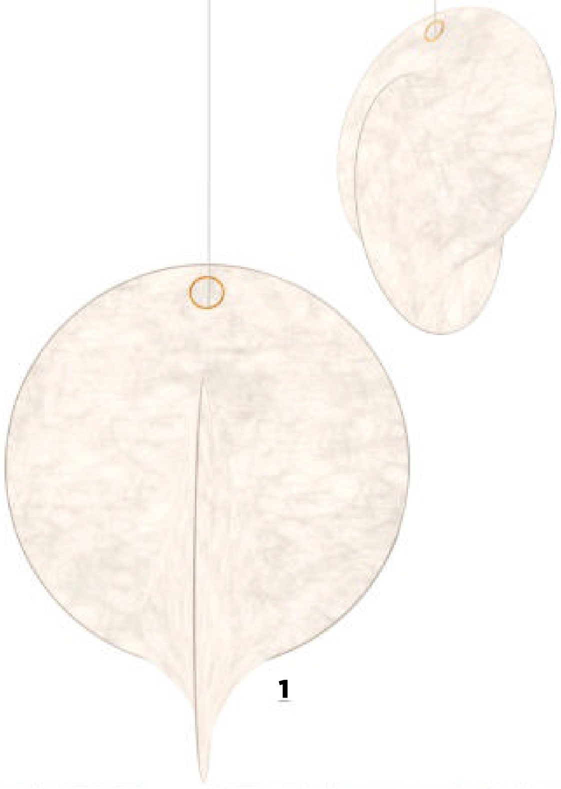
Hole up in one of Bellevue Hotel & Spa's 39 rooms, or in one of their three chalets; the hotel offers spectacular views of the Gran Paradiso glacier, which one might enjoy surrounded in cosy and classy interiors. Once enough rest has been had, guests can look to various experiences and activities: spa treatments to rejuvenate the body and amazing food and wine for nourishing the soul. The hotel is equipped with wine and cheese cellars and a kitchen garden, housing over 2,000 wine labels and aged Alpine and Parma cheese. Only the freshest of vegetables and herbs are harvested by the cooks; this means a meal at Bellevue is a meal to savour indeed.

Live the dream by taking a page out of the Swiss classic, Heidi. You can even bring home a piece of Italy: perfumes, teas, pewter products, bedspreads, bags made from aged leather, hats, and traditional alpine handicrafts are available from the hotel's very own boutique, Le Marché aux Puces. ■

Keep your eyes peeled for special offers! For more information visit, www.hotelbellevue.it/en

ALL PHOTOS MICHELE DE VITA

text NG YI XIANG


1

ROUND BOUND

Like multi-hued bubbles hovering in the room, these circular accessories help to add a sparkle & liveliness into the home.

2

4

3

5

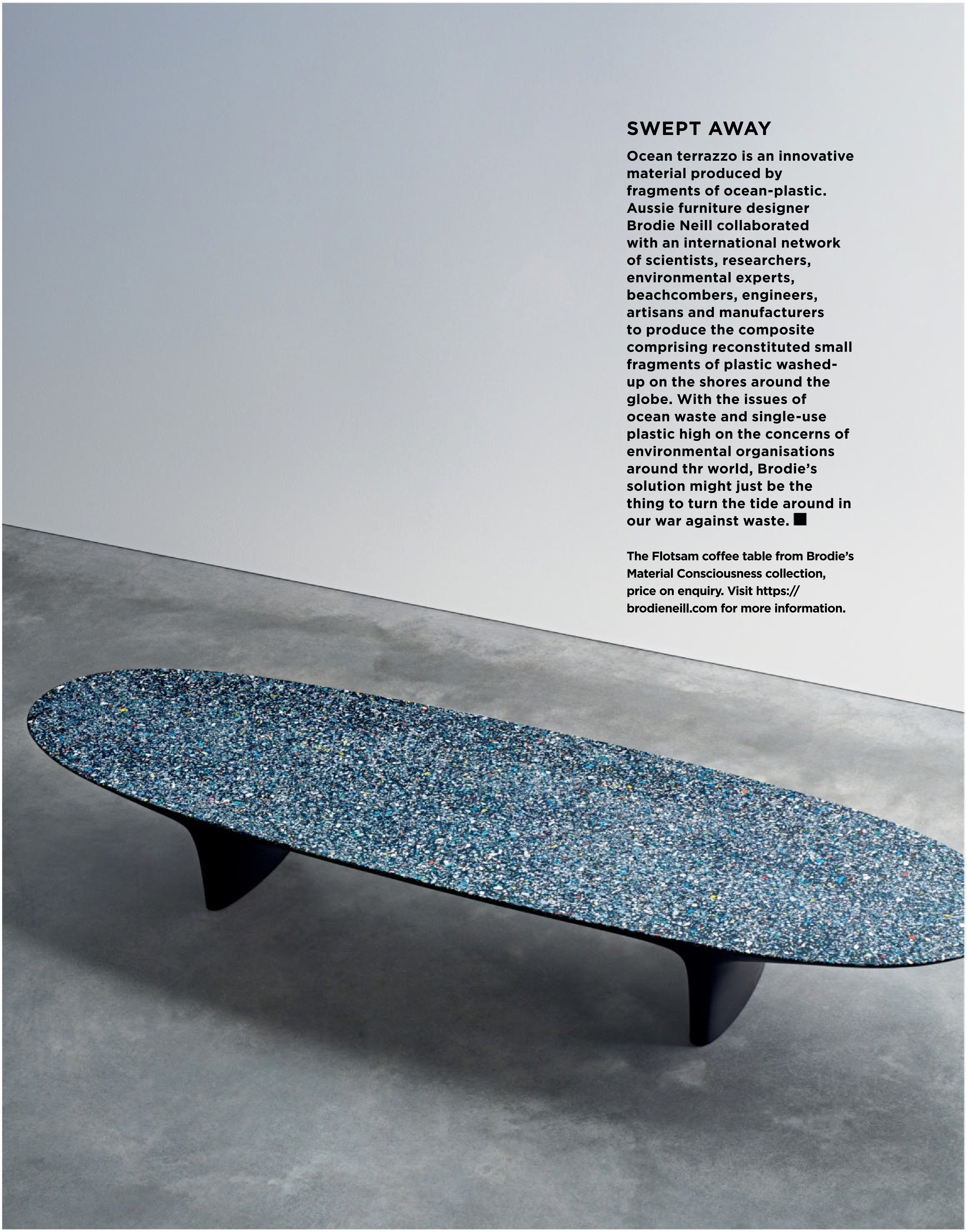
6

1., 5., & 6. Flos Overlay, prices upon request; Bocci 28 pendant, from $1,450; Moooi Raimond suspension lamps, from $4,060, all from www.spacefurniture.com.sg

2. Circle pendant by Northern, from $277, available from https://danishdesignco.com.sg

3. Sammanlänkad LED solar-powered table lamp, $149, available from IKEA.

4. Orbis Ceiling Light from Brokis, starting from $995, available at www.brokis.cz



SWEPT AWAY

Ocean terrazzo is an innovative material produced by fragments of ocean-plastic. Aussie furniture designer Brodie Neill collaborated with an international network of scientists, researchers, environmental experts, beachcombers, engineers, artisans and manufacturers to produce the composite comprising reconstituted small fragments of plastic washed-up on the shores around the globe. With the issues of ocean waste and single-use plastic high on the concerns of environmental organisations around thr world, Brodie's solution might just be the thing to turn the tide around in our war against waste. ■

The Flotsam coffee table from Brodie's Material Consciousness collection, price on enquiry. Visit https://brodieneill.com for more information.

PHOTO ANGELA MOORE

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